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PIONER

Special Tribute to Parley P. Pratt

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PIONEER

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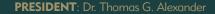
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Daguerreotype of Parley P. Pratt, courtesy Church History Library

Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and David Whitmer ordained Parley P. Pratt an Apostle on February 21, 1835, in a schoolhouse in Kirtland, Ohio.



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of Utah Pioneers™

BY THOMAS G. ALEXANDER



Parley P. Pratt stood as an equal in a quorum of giants. All of these men played significant roles

in the early history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Essays in the *Pioneer* magazine provide an insight into the life of this remarkable man. They grew out of the symposium the SUP sponsored on May 9, 2015. If you missed this outstanding event, promise yourself you will come next year. Mark May 7, 2016, on your calendar. The symposium next year will be excellent as well.

The articles in this issue give us a taste of the symposium. Matt Grow writes of Pratt's missionary work and writing. Steve Pratt provides an insightful treatment of Pratt's poetry. Alex Baugh highlights the agony of Pratt's incarceration. Mitch Pratt unfolds the suffering of Pratt's last marriage and his cold-blooded murder. Elder Craig A. Cardon provides a keynote introduction to the messages with a tribute to Grandpa Parley.

Among the first of the Twelve Parley Pratt stands as the Church's preeminent publicist. His A Voice of Warning (1837) was the most effective message of the Restoration in the Church's early years. He served as first editor of the Millennial Star, the Church's longestrunning periodical. His Key to the

Science of Theology (1855) was the early Church's most significant essay in speculative theology. Published posthumously, his Angel of the Prairies: A Dream of the Future speculates on the world in peaceful times following Christ's second coming.

Pratt's more than 150 poems, many of which have been set to music, are remarkable for their literary quality. These are songs of the Restoration, Christ's atonement, and the Millennium. Eight appear in the current Latter-day Saint hymn book.

In view of his limited education, we marvel at Pratt's literary skill. Pratt compensated by reading voraciously. He "always loved a book." Wide reading stoked his fertile and creative mind to write a significant body of poetry. He was a master of the couplet.

He devoted his life to preaching of the Restoration. Missions took him throughout the eastern and midwestern United States and eastern Canada. Between 1839 and 1841 he served with nine of the Twelve Apostles in Great Britain. Others left, but he remained until October 1842 as editor of the Millennial Star. He also served missions to South America and to Mexico.

As the anti-Mormon Missourians drove the Latter-day Saints from the state, the government incarcerated a number of Church leaders. Pratt spent eight months in jail in Independence, Richmond, and Columbia,

Missouri, under almost unbearable conditions. As was his wont, he commemorated his imprisonment in a poem ending in a couplet: A theme full of Glory, inspired their tongue / Of Zion's Redemption most sweetly they sung.

Parley P. Pratt's earthly ministry ended on a forsaken road some 12 miles from Van Buren, Arkansas, on May 13, 1857, at the hands of Hector McLean, the former husband of Parley's wife Eleanor McComb. Mitch Pratt was a member of the party of Parley's descendants in a spiritual odyssey to the grave site of their ancestor.

In Mitch's words, the undertaking was never about finding the body—it was rather a search for spiritual insight into the life of this remarkable man.

Elder Cardon capped his memorial to Grandpa Parley with these words: "As an ordained apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, Grandpa Parley was a prolific proclaimer of the message of the restored gospel, an indefatigable defender of truth, and an uncompromising disciple of God's divine will. He was an author and editor. He was a devoted husband and father. He lived his life with complete faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; and on May 13, 1857, at the hands of an assassin, he died firmly rooted in that faith. Thanks be to God for this great man. Thanks be to God for Grandpa Parley."

Lecho that sentiment: Thanks be to God for Elder Pratt.

Grandpa Parley Editor, Husband, Father

BY ELDER CRAIG A. CARDON, First Quorum of the Seventy

May 9, 2015 Sons of Utah Pioneers Annual Historical Symposium

n preparing this article, I find myself once again owing a debt ▲ of gratitude to Grandpa Parley P. Pratt: his life continues to richly bless mine, now nearly 160 years following

his death. I hope I will be forgiven for taking the liberty in writing of my great-great-grandfather as "Grandpa Parley" and "Parley." You should know that prior to preparing this article, I had never referred to him as "Grandpa Parley," and seldom as "Parley"—but only as "Parley P. Pratt" or as "Elder Pratt." Given what I have come to know of his relationships with and love for his wives and children, it is my sincere hope that neither he nor you will consider my use of more intimate names to be disrespectful or overly casual. For me during these past weeks and months, they have become expressions of increased love, respect, and endearment.

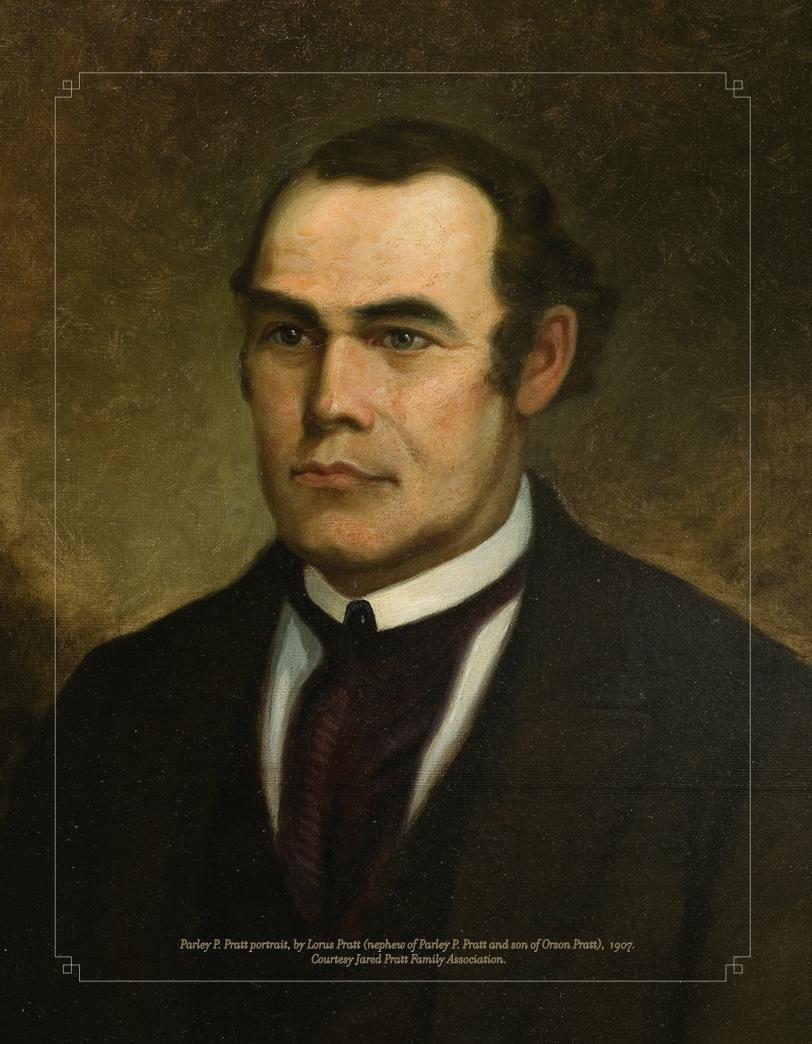
Among my current General Authority responsibilities is that of serving as editor of Church magazines. Along with my familial relationship to Grandpa Parley, my own editorial responsibility has influenced my writing of Grandpa Parley's activities as author and editor, which will be a primary focus here. I will also share some of what we know of Grandpa Parley from his wives.



Parley P. Pratt was born on April 12, 1807. He was baptized on or around September 1, 1830, at the age of 23; that same evening he was ordained an elder.² Just over two weeks later, on September 19, 1830, he baptized his brother, Orson, who was 19 years old. During the Restoration, it is no small thing that the Lord not only called a boy prophet through whom He would restore essential, eternal gospel truths

to the earth, but that He also called and quickly commissioned many other relatively young men who thereafter devoted their lives to the Lord's purposes. The average age of the original members of the Quorum of the Twelve was only 28. The oldest two were 35, and the youngest four were 23. Parley, the seventh oldest, was 27 years of age when he was ordained to the apostleship on February 21, 1835, and he would serve in the Quorum of the Twelve for a little over 22 years.

The Lord spoke to Grandpa Parley on several occasions, as recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants. About a month following his baptism, Parley received the following instruction from the Lord: "I will that he shall declare my gospel and learn of me, and be meek and lowly of heart" (D&C 32:1-3). The Lord then directed Parley to go with Oliver Cowdery and Peter Whitmer "into the wilderness among the Lamanites." Seven months later, the Lord commanded the then 24-year-old Parley, along with Sidney Rigdon and Leman



Copley, to "go and preach my gospel which ye have received, even as ye have received it, unto the Shakers" (D&C 49:1).

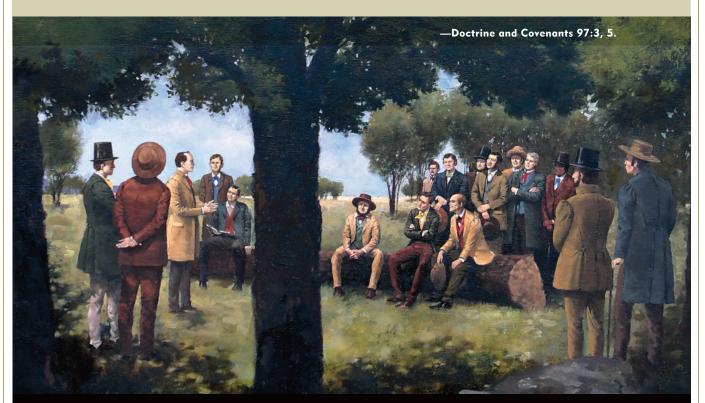
Two days later, the Lord expanded the commission to Parley by telling him, along with Joseph Wakefield, to "go forth among the churches and strengthen them by the word of exhortation" (D&C 50:37). And on August 2, 1833, when Parley was 26 years old, the Lord told Joseph Smith in Kirtland, "I, the Lord, am well pleased . . . with my servant Parley P. Pratt, for he abideth in me. . . . And I will bless him with a multiplicity of blessings, in expounding all scriptures and mysteries to the

edification of the school and of the church in Zion" (D&C 97:3, 5).

The "school," was the School of the Elders, and "multiplicity of blessings, in expounding all scriptures and mysteries," referenced the prodigious spiritual strength and the talents of written and oral expression with which the Lord blessed Grandpa Parley for the edification of the Church. Literally within days of his conversion to the restored gospel, Parley was being used by the Lord to meaningfully influence the language and thought of His fledgling kingdom.

Historian David Whittaker notes: "Between

"I, the Lord am well pleased . . . with my servant Parley P. Pratt, for he abideth in me. . . . And I will bless him with a multiplicity of blessings."



A School of the Elders was conducted by Parley P. Pratt in Jackson County, Missouri, during summer 1833. The Temple, A Holy School is a 10' x 18' mural hanging in the Education in Zion Gallery in the Joseph F. Smith Building at Brigham Young University. The gallery offers a wide variety of enlightening programs that emphasize the importance of educating the whole soul. For program dates, times, and details, visit the gallery's website at educationinzion.byu.edu.

1835 and his death in 1857, Pratt published over 40 separate items, founded or edited several Mormon newspapers, edited Mormon scriptures for publication, and composed poems for and helped edit Church hymnals. At the time of his death, he left manuscripts for a play, a number of unpublished essays, and an autobiography. His sermons and correspondence were extensive, and they remain untapped sources for probing his life and thought."3 Any one of these writing or publishing endeavors would be worthy of careful review and comment, but I focus on Parley's contributions in establishing the Millennial Star.

ollowing initial missionary efforts of Orson Γ Hyde, Heber C. Kimball, and other members of the Twelve in Great Britain in 1837, a "second apostolic mission, from 1839 to 1841, brought nine apostles (including the Pratt brothers) to the British Isles." According to Whittaker, while "the first British missionaries primarily used oral preaching, not the press, to spread their message, the second mission, largely as a result of [Parley P.] Pratt's involvement, would take a much different approach."4 With the permission of the Prophet Joseph, and working in conjunction with members of the Twelve in the British Isles, Parley became the author and editor of numerous pamphlets; he also assumed responsibility for three major publications: the British edition of the Book of Mormon, a new British hymnal, and a periodical for British Saints entitled The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star. As founding editor of this last-named publication, and while it was still in the planning stage, Parley defined its purpose as being confined to "the great work of the spread of truth."5

The first issue was published in May 1840. True to the vision he had espoused in its prospectus, Parley saw the Millennial Star as a means of formalizing the history of the Church in that part of the Lord's vineyard and of directly and vigorously correcting misinformation being perpetrated

about the Mormons. In his preface to "the first bound volume of the Millennial Star, dated April 17, 1841," Parley declared that, through it and subsequent volumes, British Saints would "hand down to posterity a journal" of their experiences.6 Within this

same volume, Parley also noted that "Lies, Slanders, Misrepresentations, etc., in all their varied forms, have been heralded forth from the press and pulpit, and have come in upon the world like a flood of water out of the mouth of the dragon, to stop the progress of truth, but all in vain."7

Parley also came to see the Millennial Star as a tool for teaching and training missionaries in their important and sacred duties. Accordingly, he offered "practical advice on dealing with anti-Mormon works," counseling missionaries to "Look at Both Sides of the Question" and to find civil and kind ways of "answering objections" and "correcting misrepresentations."8 As evidenced by these and other writings in the Millennial Star, Grandpa Parley was forthright, eloquent, and prophetic in his declaration, promulgation, and defense of gospel truths, always remaining confident in the Lord's promises and purposes. The Millennial Star provided a regular forum for the instruction of both preachers and hearers of the gospel, a forum through which all could be strengthened together and conversion deepened.

Parley was editor of the Millennial Star for over two years, serving in that capacity until he left the British Isles in October 1842. The publication continued after him as a monthly, semimonthly, or weekly mainstay of the British Saints. Eventually, as the Church sought to encourage uniformity and to correlate its worldwide message more effectively, the Millennial Star was replaced by the Ensign at the end of 1970.9 During its 130 years of existence the Millennial Star had 49 editors (many of whom also presided over the mission in the British Isles), including Orson Pratt, Franklin D. Richards, Heber J. Grant, George Albert Smith, David O. McKay, James E. Talmage, Hugh B. Brown,

Thankful Halsey

and Mark E. Peterson. All were guided by the words of Parley's founding editorial in the premiere issue of the Millennial Star, wherein Parley declared that that periodical would be "devoted to the spread of the fulness of the gospel—the restoration of the ancient principles of Christianity—the gathering of Israel—the rolling forth of the kingdom of God among the nations—the signs of the times—the fulfilment of prophecy—recording the judgments of God as they befall the nations, whether signs in the heavens or in the earth, 'blood, fire, or vapor of smoke'—in short whatever is shown forth indicative of the coming of the Son of Man, and the ushering in of his universal reign on the earth."10

Tnow turn to what we know of Grandpa Parley lacksquare from the perspectives of his wives and children. Whatever critics may think of polygamy or of the reality of its restoration and relatively brief practice in the history of the Church, I must express gratitude to Grandpa Parley for his having obeyed the commandment of plural marriage as extended to him, for my presence on earth is occasioned through his fourth marriage. Within this context, it is most appropriate to consider Grandpa Parley's eloquent testimony concerning Joseph Smith's instruction and counsel to him in 1839.

"During these interviews, he [Joseph] taught me many great and glorious principles concerning God and the heavenly order of eternity. . . . It was at this time that I received from him the first idea of eternal family organization, and the eternal union of the sexes in those inexpressibly endearing relationships which . . . are at the very foundation of everything worthy to be called happiness. . . .

"It was from him that I learned that the wife of my bosom might be secured to me for time and all eternity; and that the refined sympathies and affections which endeared us to each other emanated from the fountain of divine eternal love. . . .

"I had loved before, but I knew not why. But now I loved—with a pureness—an intensity of elevated, exalted feeling, which would lift my soul from the transitory things of this groveling sphere and expand it as the ocean. I felt that God was my heavenly

Father indeed; that Jesus was my brother, and that the wife of my bosom was an immortal, eternal companion."11

Grandpa Parley had 12 wives. While there were no children from the last two wives, the first 10 bore him 30 children, and in addition, one child was adopted. From these 31 children came 266 grandchildren. Now, nearly 160 years since his death, Parley's direct descendants number in the tens of thousands.

Parley was 20 years old when, in 1827, he proposed to "a 30-year-old widow" named Thankful Halsey.¹² His proposal provides a sense of the unity of purpose among a husband, wife, and God that Parley sought to maintain in all his family associations. Because Parley had recently joined the Baptist Church and was planning to preach to the American Indians, he said to Thankful, "In view of all these things[,] if you still love me and desire to share my future you are worthy to be my wife. If not, we will agree to be friends forever; but part to meet no more in time."13 They were married. Three years later he and Thankful would learn of the restoration of the gospel and be baptized. Six and a half years after that, Thankful passed away giving birth to their only son.

In May 1837, about two months following Thankful's death, Parley married Mary Ann Frost, also a Church member. Like Thankful, Mary Ann was also a widow at the time she married Parley; her first husband had died two years earlier and had left her with an infant daughter. Unlike the older Thankful, however, Mary Ann was about eight months younger than Parley. Together Mary Ann and Parley had four children. She stayed with him through financial hardships, clashes with

Missourians, and illness. She endured his arrest and imprisonment after the Battle of Crooked River on October 25, 1838; indeed, she and two children lived with Parley for three of the eight months he was imprisoned because it was safer and more comfortable for them in prison than in their hut in Far West. While in prison she helped Parley save a manuscript history of the Missouri persecutions by smuggling it out of the prison. She concealed it in her clothes and convinced

he guards to let her leave the prison to get medical help for her daughter who had been injured.14

It is hard to measure the difficulties Parley and Mary Ann faced. Besides those just mentioned, there were other challenges. Three of their four children were born before Parley learned details of the doctrine of plural marriage from Joseph Smith in May or June of 1843. Although it was a trial for both Mary Ann and Parley, with Mary Ann's blessing, Parley married Elizabeth Brotherton in July

Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and David Whitmer ordained Parley P. Pratt an Apostle on February 21, 1835, in a schoolhouse in Kirtland, Ohio.



1843. In December 1843, Mary Ann and Parley's five-year-old son Nathan died of complications from a broken leg. In August 1844, their one-yearold daughter Susan died. Just one month later, in September 1844, Parley married Mary Wood. He then married Hannahette Snively and Belinda Marden three weeks apart in November 1844.¹⁵ Thus, in just over one year, Mary Ann saw the death of two of their children and Parley's marriage to four additional wives. With Hannahette, the third of these additional wives, was already

pregnant, Parley left on a mission in December 1844, taking with him only Belinda, the sixth wife.

Consistent with his intent to follow the will of God (as evidenced in his proposal years earlier to Thankful), Parley tried to appropriately balance his missionary responsibilities and devotion to his family. In a heartfelt letter to Mary Ann from the mission field in December 1844, Parley wrote:

"I never left home with more intense feelings, nor under more trying circumstances than the present, except the time I went to prison and to [possible] death leaving you sick of a fever with a babe three months old and to the mercy of savages.

"Now my dear, what shall I say to you, you shall ever be with me and all I have is thine and I am thine forever and you shall forever reign in glory and in a fulness of joy with those you love. So be of good cheer and you shall not

often have trials hereafter but will be blessed; for you have sacrificed enough and a day of blessing awaits you."16

Nonetheless, the physical and emotional distance between Mary Ann and Parley was too great for the necessary nurturing of their relationship; she left Parley. In February 1846, with Brigham Young's permission, Mary Ann was sealed to her deceased husband, Nathan Stearns "for time," and sealed to the deceased Joseph Smith, Jr., "for eternity,"17 a distinction of some significance.18

"I have a good and virtuous husband whom I love. We have four little children which are mutually and inexpressibly dear to us. And besides this, my husband has seven other living wives, and one who has departed to a better world. He has in all upwards of twentyfive children. All these mothers and children are endeared to me by kindred ties, —by mutual affection."



Following the separation from Mary Ann, Parley married his seventh wife and sixth plural wife, Sarah Houston, in October 1845. Then, in February 1846, he married Phoebe Elizabeth Soper; on the same day in April 1847, he married Martha Monks and Ann Agatha Walker. After two years of marriage and after bearing a son who lived only one month, Martha left Parley—the only other wife besides Mary Ann to do so. The death of her child was more than Martha could endure. According to Pratt family records, she was "influenced by a wicked spirit"; shortly thereafter, she left Utah for California and never returned.19 Parley would later marry Keziah Downes in December 1853 and Eleanor Jane McComb in November 1855, neither of whom bore him children.²⁰

In a letter dated January 12, 1854, Belinda Marden Pratt, Parley's sixth wife and fifth plural wife, wrote a letter from Utah to her sister, Lydia, in New Hampshire responding to her sister's concern about and criticism of the life of plural marriage Belinda had chosen. Belinda's lengthy response is one of the most articulate, cogent, and exhaustive defenses of plural marriage I have ever read. Understandably, it addresses the subject from a religious perspective and makes detailed references to the Old Testament and the New Testament. It reveals Belinda's believing mind and heart on the subject and establishes the acceptability of the practice to God. In part, Belinda writes:

"I have, (as you see, in all good conscience, founded on the word of God,) formed family and kindred ties, which are inexpressibly dear to me; and which I can never bring my feelings to consent to dissolve.

"I have a good and virtuous husband whom I love. We have four little children which are mutually and inexpressibly dear to us. And besides this, my husband has seven other living wives, and one who has departed to a better world. He has in all upwards of twenty-five children. All these mothers and children are endeared to me by kindred ties, —by mutual affection—by acquaintance and

association; and the mothers in particular by mutual and long continued exercises of toil, patience, long-suffering and sisterly kindness. . . . I know that these are good and worthy women, and that my husband is a good and worthy man; one who keeps the commandments of Jesus Christ, and presides in his family like an Abraham. He seeks to provide for them with all diligence; he loves them all, and seeks to comfort them and make them happy. He teaches them the commandments of Jesus Christ, and gathers them about him in the family circle to call upon his God, both morning and evening."21

7 ith his participation in plural marriage, Parley's family grew rapidly. Steven Pratt notes that by late 1848 Parley and his "nine children [and] eight wives" lived "in an adobe house," where Parley "named and blessed" his children, "taking names for his sons from the Book of Mormon."22 Parley's tenth wife and ninth plural wife, Ann Agatha Walker, said that Parley "hailed each newcomer with much pleasure and delight as if it were the only one"—and that he often gathered his children around him to hear them sing "childish songs," putting as many of the children on his lap as possible.²³ Making the simple declaration that "the Pratt household swarmed with children," Terryl Givens and Matt Grow add that "by the end of 1853, the family (not including his two living children with Mary Ann Frost) consisted of [a] sixteen-year-old [son]; [an] eight-year-old [son]; two seven-year-old boys . . .; [a] six-year-old [girl]; five five-year-olds . . .; three two-year-olds . . .; and three infants."24

In a letter to Parley dated November 17, 1854, Agatha confidently declared, "I know I have a place in your heart's best affections and I just exactly mean to keep it forever by doing the best I can all the time." Her letter continues with these tender feelings:

"[M]y heart warms within me my soul thrills with unutterable joy and delight when I think how I am blessed, with your kind love and affections. I

feel as if I could endure any thing, as for poverty why that's second nature to us, I don't know as we could live without it and as for riches I never want them a great supply of them till I have wisdom given me to make the best possible use of them, for I would rather live poor all my days than to have my mind led away or my heart estranged from the work of God or from you or the children for I know that there is nothing on earth to bear the least comparison with these things."²⁵

A letter to his family dated July 29, 1854, reveals the genuine joy of Grandpa Parley's heart for eternal family relationships. He began with a long salutation listing 24 individual family names, with an "and" distinctly separating each name from the one following it, and ending with the phrase, "and so many more as there be." He then adds, "Br. Morris sais it is a long catalogue of names for one family circle. I say; the Lord increase it a hundred fold while I yet Live."²⁶

Imust share a word about my great-great-grand-mother, Mary Wood Pratt, Parley's fourth wife and third plural wife, quoting from a family history document in my possession:

"After the tragic death of her husband, Mary took over the full responsibility of rearing her four small children. Helaman, the oldest [my great-grandfather], was only ten years of age. Her training as a seamstress and milliner were invaluable to her at this time. . . . Eventually she built a little home which was located west of North Temple Street. Later she went to live in what was known as the Big Field (Forest Dale) to be near her daughters. . . .

"In her young widowhood, she received many proposals of marriage from prominent men, but always, she said, the face of Parley came to her and she could see no other man as her husband. She reared her two sons and two daughters, saw them all married in the Mary Wood

temple and all active energetic church workers."²⁷

It is interesting to note that with his death, Grandpa Parley left nine widows, all of whom outlived him by decades. In an era of plural marriage, in which remarriage opportunities for widows were readily available, and even

somewhat expected, only three of Parley's nine widows remarried, and all three of those subsequent marriages ended unhappily.²⁸

I conclude with a quotation from Grandpa Parley himself, written in 1853, four years prior to his martyrdom:

"I have been Married a dozen times and have now seven living wives and am the Father of near thirty Children. It would do you good to see my family circle assembled for family worship in our great parlor. One of my wives is a native of New Hampshire, another of New York, one of Pennsylvania, one of Ohio, two of England, one of Scotland; my little boys and girls are fine good children as can be found. We generally live in love and harmony, and I have very seldom a wife who would be willing to live aside from the society of the others. They love and mutually assist each other and so do the children."²⁹

As an ordained apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, Grandpa Parley was a prolific proclaimer of the message of the restored gospel, an indefatigable defender of truth, and an uncompromising disciple of God's divine will. He was an author and editor. He was a devoted husband and father. He lived his life with complete faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; and on May 13, 1857, at the hands of an assassin, he died firmly rooted in that faith. Thanks be to God for this great man. Thanks be to God for Grandpa Parley.

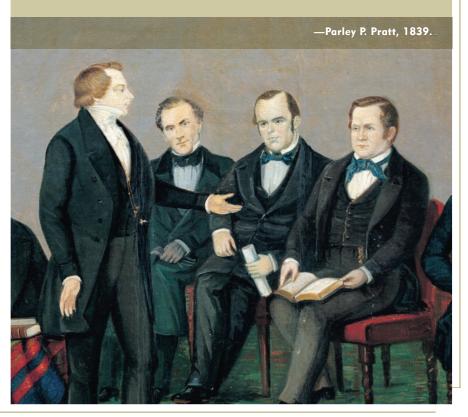
1 I am not a researcher or a historian, and what I will share here is largely the product of others—including Grandpa Parley himself, Joseph Smith, Gregory K. Armstrong, Matthew J. Grow, Terryl L. Givens, Dennis J. Siler, R. Steven Pratt, David J. Whittaker, Mathoni W. Pratt, Ben Parkinson, and Stanley P. Cardon.

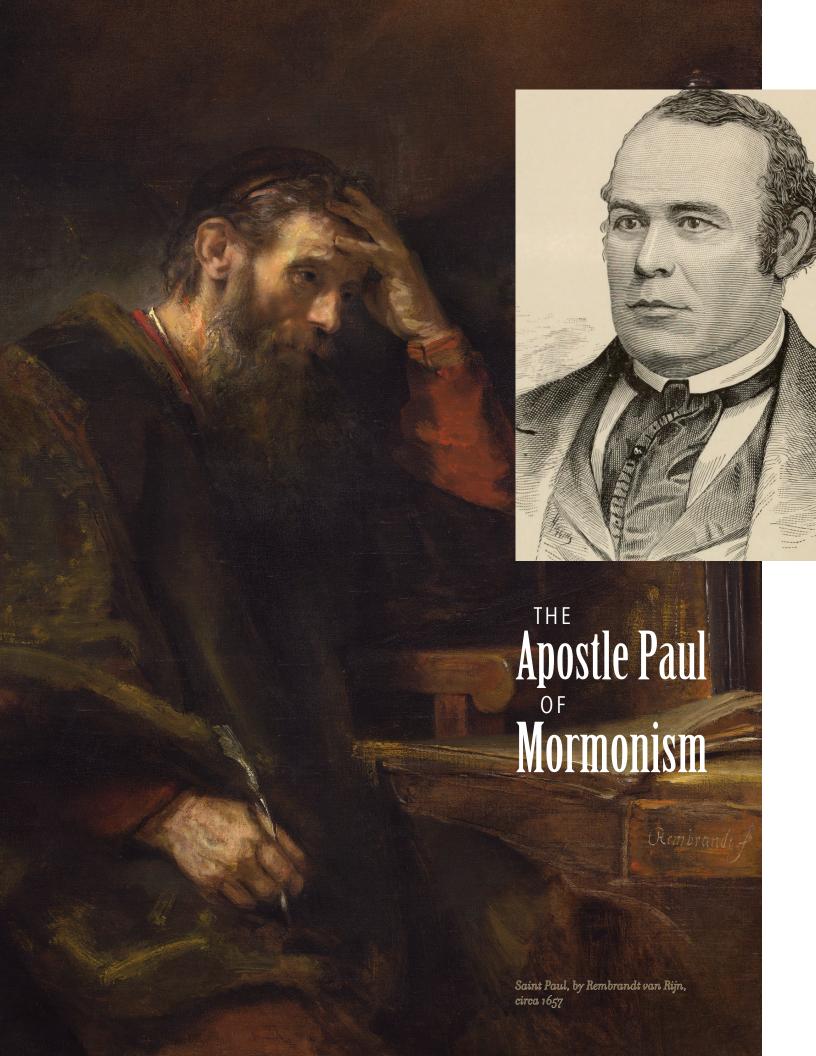
- 2 Terryl L. Givens and Matthew J. Grow, Parley P. Pratt: The Apostle Paul of Mormonism (New York: Oxford Univ. Press), 33.
- 3 David J. Whittaker, "Parley P. Pratt and Early Mormon Print Culture," in Parley P. Pratt and the Making of Mormonism, edited and with contributions by Gregory K. Armstrong, Matthew J. Grow, and Dennis J. Siler, 87.
- 4 Whittaker, 102-3.
- 5 Whittaker, 108; as Whittaker notes, the quotation is from the pre-publication *Prospectus of the Latter-day* Saints' Millennial Star.
- 6 Whittaker, 111.
- 7 Quoted in Whittaker, 112.
- 8 Whittaker, 113.
- 9 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Millennial_Star, accessed Mar. 30, 2015.
- 10 Millennial Star, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 1.
- 11 Parley P. Pratt, The Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt, ed. Parley P. Pratt, Jr. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2007), 259-60.
- 12 R. Steven Pratt, "The Family Life of Parley P. Pratt, a Case Study of Mormon Plural Marriage," in Parley P. Pratt and the Making of Mormonism, 40.
- 13 R. Steven Pratt, 40.
- 14 R. Steven Pratt, 47–50.
- 15 Givens and Grow, Appendix 2.
- 16 R. Steven Pratt, 60.
- 17 R. Steven Pratt, 63.
- 18 This distinction in terminology, being sealed "for time" and being sealed "for eternity," is explained beautifully in the special essay prepared by the Church History Department and then edited and published by the First Presidency and the Twelve in Gospel Topics on LDS.org under the title "Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo."
- 19 R. Steven Pratt, 72.
- 20 Givens and Grow, Appendix 2.
- 21 Belinda Marden Pratt, "Defense of Polygamy, By a Lady of Utah," in a Letter to Her Sister in New Hampshire, Jan. 12, 1854.

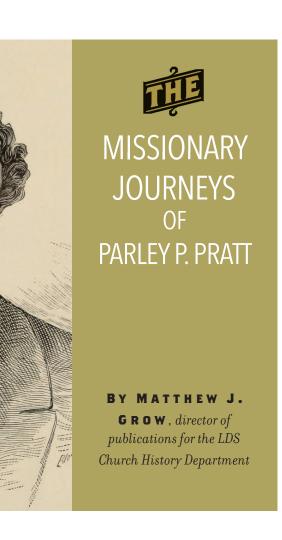
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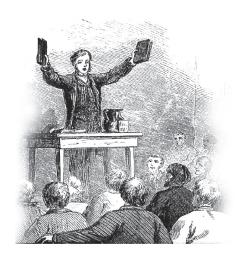
- 22 R. Steven Pratt, 71.
- 23 Quoted in R. Steven Pratt, 71.
- 24 Givens and Grow, 326.
- 25 Ann Agatha Walker Pratt to Parley P. Pratt, Jan. 30, 1855, in response to Parley's letter of Nov. 17, 1854.
- 26 Givens and Grow, 316.
- 27 "Mary Irena Pratt and Her Ancestors," Cardon family history document, 12-13. Many family members contributed to this document; the author of these specific words is unknown to me. Mary Wood Pratt died March 5, 1898, in Salt Lake City and was buried in the Forest Dale City Cemetery.
- 28 Givens and Grow, 391.
- 29 R. Steven Pratt, 39.

"It was from [Joseph Smith] that I learned that the wife of my bosom might be secured to me for time and all eternity; and that the refined sympathies and affections which endeared us to each other emanated from the fountain of divine eternal love."









n a spring day in 1853, a 46-year-old Mormon apostle sat in his modest home just outside Temple Square in Salt Lake City to respond to a request from a long-lost friend from his youth for a sketch of his life. Reflecting upon his experiences, Parley P. Pratt mused that "such a history would overload the mail" and would appear "far more strange to you than the thousand volumes of Modern Fiction." Against the background of their shared boyhood in the backwoods of New York, Pratt's subsequent life appeared improbable. He had traveled widely, led Mormon pioneer companies past the "moving masses of wild Buffalo on the boundless, treeless plains" to Utah, preached in San Francisco during the Gold Rush, crossed the Atlantic Ocean six times, and eaten "figs from the tree" in Chile. His life had been one of extremes, of "poverty and riches, peace and war," sublime joys and devastating sorrows.

Controversy had stalked him, Pratt continued, as he had "been received almost as an Angel by thousands and counted an Imposter by tens of thousands." Fifteen years previously in Missouri, he had "lain months in gloomy dungeons, and been loaded with chains," though he had "been visited there by visions of Angels and Spirits, and been delivered by miracles." Pratt had publicly debated "priests, learned men and Infidels," "stood before senators and Governors," and had "edited periodicals and written and published books." In his private life, Pratt would marry a dozen times and father 30 children. "In short," he wrote, "I have been a farmer, a servant, a fisher, a digger, a beggar, a preacher, an author, an editor, a senator, a traveler, a merchant, an elder and an Apostle of Jesus Christ." Pratt exclaimed, "Is not truth stranger than fiction!!!"1

Just as Paul was the preeminent writer of the early Christian church, Pratt, through his extensive writings, was the voice of the early Latter-day Saint movement. In addition, Paul and Pratt both journeyed extensively to proselytize for their faith. Like Paul, Pratt's extensive missionary travels helped put his movement on the path from small sect to worldwide religion. In the early and mid-1830s, he concentrated his missionary labors in large cities, including Toronto; New York City; Manchester; Liverpool; San Francisco; and Valparaiso, Chile. Pratt was a tireless and persuasive preacher. The Edinburgh Review deemed him in 1854 as "chief of the Mormon missionaries." Pratt contributed to the expansion and internationalization of early Mormonism by serving crucial missions in Canada (1836) and in England (1840–42), when thousands joined Mormonism and immigrated to the United States.

A Voice of Warning

Pratt once said, "There is power in language. Power to move upon the spirit of nations like the spirit of God moved on the face of the waters."3 In two short months during the fall of 1837 in New York City, Pratt wrote a book that became the early Church's most influential missionary tract. It powerfully spoke to its readers, telling them that the Millennium was near at hand and that they could have a part in the great latter-day work. Pratt emphasized that the Latter-day Saint church was modeled on the Christian church "as it existed at its first organization, in the days of the apostles."4 He spoke of the spiritual gifts within the Church and the restoration of authority. His was a voice of warning inviting his readers to join the latter-day work before the second coming of Christ.

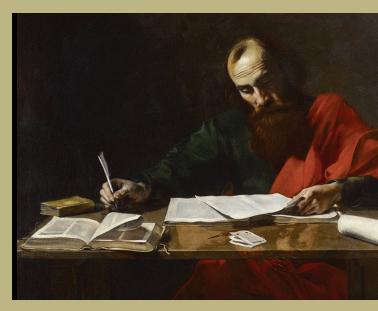
Although the first printing of three thousand copies of A Voice of Warning moved slowly at first, it sold out within two years. Pratt printed an additional twenty-five hundred in 1839 and then issued an edition in England in 1841. By that time, Pratt noted, the book had spread from the United States "into the provinces of the Canadas, as well as many parts of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales" and had "visited the cottages of the humble, and the parlours of the great." Hundreds had testified to him, Pratt wrote, that A Voice of Warning had saved "them from infidelity—and from Sectarian error and delusion."5 By the time of the Saints' arrival in Utah, the book had sold thirteen thousand copies and was in its sixth printing. The book continued its prodigious sales long after Pratt's death. In 1884, Pratt's family carefully estimated that seventy-five thousand copies had been published in 14 editions. By the end of the century, it would be printed in more than 30 English editions, as well as Danish, Dutch, French, German, Icelandic, Spanish, and Swedish versions.⁷ It was by far the most frequently mentioned book by a Mormon in Mormonism's early years.

Its preeminent role, second only to the Book of Mormon as an instrument of conversion, is typified by the experience of Sarah Studevant Leavitt. Her autobiography recounts that while living in Canada in the 1830s, her husband, Jeremiah, was given *A Voice of Warning* and a Book

of Mormon; the Leavitts soon converted. A few months later, the couple was living near Kirtland, renting a house from a Mr. Faulk, a man "noted for his wickedness." "I gave him the 'Voice of Warning,'" she recounted. "He took it home and read it. . . . Faulk joined the Church and came to Nauvoo afterward."

Another notable example demonstrating the broad reach of Pratt's book was the conversion of 66-year-old Desideria Quintanar de Yañez—the first women ever baptized in Mexico. In early 1880, Desideria had a dream in which she saw men in Mexico City publishing a pamphlet titled *La voz de amonestación*. Deeply impressed that the pamphlet would be spiritually significant for her, but too weak to travel the 75 miles from Nopala to Mexico City, Desideria sent her son José. In Mexico City, José met Mormon missionaries in the

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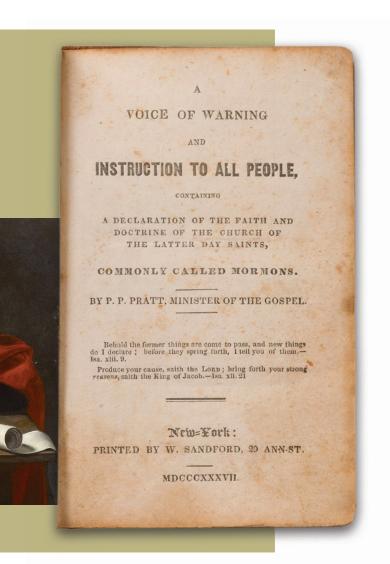


Paul Writing His Epistles, attributed to Valentin de Boulogne

process of publishing the first Spanish translation of *A Voice of Warning*. Two months later, the missionaries traveled to Nopala to baptize Desideria. Many other 19th-century conversion narratives begin with *A Voice of Warning*.

The influence of *A Voice of Warning* only increased after Pratt's death. Annie Clark Tanner, who grew to maturity in the latter half of the 19th century, remembered, "We had every encouragement to read the Church publications: *The Voice of Warning; The Pearl of Great Price;* and *Key to Theology.*" That only Pratt's writings would be on equal footing with The Pearl of Great Price, canonized in 1880, suggests the special status his works held in the minds of early Mormon leaders and laity.

For years after its initial publication, outside reviewers as well viewed Pratt's treatise on a par with Doctrine and Covenants and the Book of Mormon.



The *Baptist Advocate* mentioned the Book of Mormon in 1841 and quoted from both the Doctrine and Covenants and *A Voice of Warning,* which it called "a standard Mormon work."¹¹ A few years later, John W. Gunnison, a federal surveyor who visited Utah and then wrote a book on the Mormons, mentioned only three "books regarded as authoritative with them": the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and *A Voice of Warning.*¹²

Pratt believed deeply in the power of language in bringing converts to the early Church. *A Voice of Warning* was only one of his many writings that were designed to bring converts into the Church. He wrote quickly and often while on his missions, knowing that he could reach a much broader audience through the power of the printed word than he possibly could through preaching alone.

England, 1846-1847

After Joseph Smith's death, there was fierce competition for the loyalty of the Latter-day Saints. Brigham Young and the Twelve Apostles quickly consolidated their authority in Nauvoo and the surrounding regions. But the competition between the Apostles and two others who sought to replace Joseph Smith as the leader of the Church—Sidney Rigdon and James J. Strang—was most heated in outlying areas. Parley spent eight months in the eastern United States in late 1844 and 1845, helping to persuade many if not most Latter-day Saints in those branches to follow the Twelve. In 1846, Parley participated in the exodus from Nauvoo.

Soon after Parley arrived in Council Bluffs, after crossing Iowa in the spring of 1846, Wilford Woodruff arrived with troubling news from England. A year earlier, in April 1845, Woodruff wrote to Brigham Young, describing the worsened economic climate and unprecedented number of impoverished Saints. Woodruff endorsed a plan to create a joint stock company that would sell stock to English Saints and use it as capital "to establish manufactories in Nauvoo or elsewhere, in America, for the employment of the poor" and to raise funds for the emigration of English Saints. ¹³ It would charter ships to carry poor emigrants to America and return with American goods to sell in England. ¹⁴

Simultaneously, an economic depression hit England, fueled in part by the devastation of the Irish potato famine, heightening the desire of converts to emigrate while further limiting resources to do so. The crisis had also "overrun England in a great measure . . . for Cotton was scarce and many Factories stoped, others run 1/2 and 3/4 of the time, thus throwing hundreds and thousands of the poor into hunger for want of work." ¹¹⁵

Notwithstanding these economic catastrophes, Reuben Hedlock, the British mission president, and a few close associates raised substantial money for the joint stock company only to squander it, in Pratt's words, "in any and every way but to do good." ¹⁶ In October 1845, Woodruff wrote to Brigham that Hedlock had "manifested a spirit to gain all the influence possible" and would not consult with him. ¹⁷ The company lost money through unwise loans, officers' salaries, and overpayment to obtain a charter from Parliament. ¹⁸

Brigham and the apostles learned fully of the situation only with Woodruff's arrival in Council Bluffs. Alarmed, Brigham commissioned three apostles—Pratt, John Taylor, and Orson Hyde—to leave the Saints' camps and travel to England to disfellowship Hedlock and to reinforce the loyalty of the Saints to the apostles. 19 Sensing his opportunity, Strang belittled the corruption of the joint stock company in his newspaper and similarly dispatched three missionaries to England, including Martin Harris, whom all Mormons knew as one of the three Book of Mormon witnesses. Strang wrote that the English Saints were "in great confusion in consequence of the . . . oppressions of the Brighamites" and he hoped to reap the benefits from a "general apostasy."20

Pratt, Taylor, and Hyde had other reasons behind their journey to England. There were rumors of a plan by the English government to subsidize the emigration of thousands of impoverished British citizens to Vancouver Island to strengthen the British claim to the disputed Oregon territory. The apostles decided to propose to the English government that Mormon emigrants accomplish this purpose. 22

When they arrived in England, the three apostles dissolved the joint stock company. The

"poor Saints" had scrimped and sent "their pennies, their sixpences, their shillings" to "lay by a little money to emigrate with." However, with no checks on the officers of the company, "nearly every pound had been squandered and lent to irresponsible favorites." The English Saints, however, were still "nearly all . . . too poor to emigrate."

As planned, the apostles arranged for the Saints to petition the English government "to cede to us as her subjects a part or the whole of the Island of Vancouver, on the western coast of America; and also ship us there."²³ The British Saints delivered a 168-foot petition, containing more than thirteen thousand signatures, to Queen Victoria. The British government, however, rejected the petition and dashed Mormon hopes of gathering the British Saints on the queen's dime.²⁴

Leaving Hyde in Liverpool to edit the *Millennial Star*, Pratt and Taylor embarked on a preaching tour to the English Saints. Of one Sunday, Pratt wrote that he and Taylor "preached 3 times . . . had good

An economic depression hit England, fueled in part by the devastation of the Irish potato famine.



Prayer for the Potato Crop, by Jean-François Millet, 1857

attention and at evening Every part was crammed with attentive hearers; Galery, Stand, and every knook and Corner" at the largest hall in the city. Pratt wrote home, "The Spirit of the Lord Came mightily upon us; we poured forth our testimony as if heaven and earth was Coming togather. The people Listened for hours, and when we were through they seemed loth to leave their Seats."²⁵

According to Pratt, the English Saints received him and Taylor as "the Apostles and prophets of old. . . . they strive who shall wash our feet—comb our hair, or any other kindness. And I must say of Late they have thined my hair considerably in begging locks of the same to keep as memorials." One young convert recalled Pratt's electrifying preaching, "I remember hearing Parley P. Pratt speak one Sunday evening, and of loving the words he said so much that I felt as if I could lay down my life for him."

Though Pratt relished the warmth of the Saints and the fertile mission field, he constantly lamented his separation from his family. Only the power of the Spirit and the joys of the ministry, which "thrills through every extremity of our Spirit and Body as it were with a throb of Immortality," Pratt assured his family, compensated for his "feeling of Lonliness and desolation" at his "Long separation" from his "Lambs."²⁸

Pratt and Taylor continued their preaching tour through December, traveling as far as Glasgow. Feeling by late December that they had achieved their purpose, the three apostles made plans to return to the United States.²⁹ The preaching and writing of Pratt, Taylor, and Hyde and the trust they carried with them from years of labor with the British Saints combined to blunt any success the Strangites or other dissenters might otherwise have enjoyed. Martin Harris's Strangite mission failed; one missionary noted that a quarterly church conference declined to listen to him and that police removed him when he insisted on preaching outside the conference.³⁰ The British Saints remained overwhelmingly loyal to the apostolic quorum. This little-known mission of Pratt, Taylor, and Hyde was instrumental in ensuring that the British Saints remained tied to the Church led by the apostles.

Chile

During its first two decades, Mormonism operated primarily within the English-speaking world. In the early 1850s, Mormon eyes turned westward and southward toward the Pacific and Latin America. In 1851, Brigham Young designated Pratt to preside over an ambitious missionary program in the Pacific. And they hoped he might "open the door of life to Japan & China, Bornea & Chili," and eventually to "every country, & Kingdom, city & village on the Pacific."

Pratt traveled with a group of missionaries to San Francisco, then in the midst of the gold rush. While there, he coordinated missionary work throughout the Pacific, including in Hawaii, Australia, and northern California, and prepared to sail for Chile. Pratt probably chose Chile because of political problems in Mexico and Central America, as well as his belief that the Book of Mormon prophet Lehi had landed in Chile.³²

Accompanied by Rufus Allen and his wife Phoebe Soper, Pratt departed San Francisco on September 5, taking economical passage on the Henry Kelsey, a small cargo ship without passenger accommodations.³³ Pratt characterized their 64-day passage as "most tedious and disagreeable." Their "miser for a captain," he complained, would not allow the steward "to cook potatoes, bread, pies, puddings, or any other holesome or palitable food; but keeps us on mouldy, hard bread full of bugs and worms; and on salt beef and pork, the pork being rotten. He has flour, potatoes and good pork in plenty, but will not allow it to be used." The passage was particularly difficult for Phoebe, then in an advanced stage of pregnancy; Parley worried that she "eats but little, vommets continually, and is getting verry poor in flesh."

The Pratts and Allen planned to pass their time on the ship by studying Spanish. However, after a month on board, Pratt wrote, "We have not been able to read, write or studdy much."³⁴

In Valparaíso, Chile, Pratt found a vibrant and cosmopolitan city, the busiest Pacific port in the Americas and the main stopping point for U.S. and European ships sailing around Cape Horn for California. Of the city's population of around thirty thousand, a third were foreign. Pratt and his wife

and fellow missionary initially stayed at a hotel where "the proprietor speaks french, the Bar tender french and a few words of broken english: the landlady German, and the waiter Spanish. ourselves speak English with a little Spanish, so you see we have a little babel of our own." They soon purchased furniture and rented a one-room house.³⁵

Pratt's attempts to preach, however, were foiled by an inflationary occur. by an inflationary economy, anti-American sentiment, civil unrest, and the religious restrictions of a Catholic nation. The voracious California demand for grains, fruits, and vegetables led to a boom in Chilean agriculture but also caused prices to soar. The missionaries' presence in a foreign country where they spoke little of the native language rendered the usual mode of missionary travel—without purse or scrip—impossible, and their inability with the language made finding temporary employment, another common missionary tactic, improbable as well.36 The missionaries arrived in Chile during a period of intense civil conflict between the conservative regime and liberal dissidents, though the actual battles raged outside of the area where the Pratts and Allen lived.

In addition, Pratt arrived at a particularly rocky moment in the relationship between the United States and Chile. The Gold Rush increased economic and cultural ties between the nations but exacerbated tensions. More than half of Chile's commercial ships were stuck in California when their crews abandoned them for the gold fields, allowing foreign ships to capture a share of the Chilean market. News of the mistreatment of Chileans in California also embittered Chileans.³⁷

Finally, for the first time in his years of missionary labors, Pratt found himself in a Catholic nation with limited religious liberty. The Chilean Constitution declared Catholicism the state religion and denied freedom of worship to other denominations, including the right to publish religious literature and hold services. The restrictions frustrated Pratt and precluded his normal missionary tactics of publishing tracts and holding public meetings.³⁸

On November 30, three weeks after their

arrival in Chile, Phoebe gave birth to a son, Omner. According to Phoebe's great-granddaughter, "No doctor could be found when her labor started, and two native women acted as midwives. Since Phoebe was making no headway with her pains the two women lifted her by the armpits and shook her violently up and down until they literally shook the baby into the world. Such treatment not only permanently weakened Phoebe but injured the baby."39 Over the next 38 days, the baby "pined away and finally died" of "consumption" on January 7 and was buried in the "Protestant Burying Grounds" in Valparaíso. 40 Pratt wrote, "He was a beautiful Child. . . . During all the s[c]enes of his birth, life, death, and burial no female friend was near except his mother, except strangers who knew not our language."41

Two weeks after they buried Omner, concerned for Phoebe's health and frustrated by the high costs of Valparaíso, the Pratts and Allen moved to Quillota, a small town 40 miles northeast on the route between Santiago and

Like Paul, Pratt's extensive missionary travels helped put his movement on the path from small sect to worldwide religion.



Apostle Paul Preaching on the Ruins, by Giovanni Paolo Pannini

Valparaíso. Soon thereafter, Pratt decided further efforts were in vain. With Allen and Phoebe, on March 2 he embarked for California. The principal cause of their early departure, Pratt admitted, was their lack of "sufficient [knowledge] of the Language to turn the keys of the gospel as yet to those nations." While on the ship, Pratt reflected in a letter to Brigham Young on his Chilean mission and the future of the Church in Latin America. He described his mission as having been "devoted by us to the Study of the Spanish language, and the Laws, Constitutions, Geography, History, Caractor, Religion, Manners, Customs, revolutions and events of Chile and peru in particular and of Spanish America in general." Fact-finding, not proselytism, had occupied their time.

Notwithstanding his setbacks, Pratt advocated

sending more missionaries to Latin America. Still optimistic, Pratt thought that he might be able to translate the Book of Mormon and write "some in Spanish" after he continued to improve in the language. The other apostles, Pratt wrote, should follow his example of language training: "If the Twelve Apostles will divide the European languages between them and each become thoroughly versed on one, so as to translate the fulness of the Gospel and turn the Keys in the same, it will be a very great step toward the consummation, for a host of fellow laborers would soon be raised up in each to cooperate with them."42 Notwithstanding Pratt's hopes,



Mormon missionaries did not return to South America until 1923 and Chile until 1956.⁴³

Conclusion

In a discourse in the Tabernacle, Pratt gave insight into his attitude towards the Latter-day Saints and what he perceived as the ongoing missionary work in this world and beyond. He told the Saints, "Then here is my heart, and here is my hand to every good Saint in this world, in the world of spirits, in the resurrected world, and in all the worlds connected with this warfare and with this work—here is my heart and hand! Depend upon it, if I am counted worthy, I will be somewhere about whether I stay here or go there, whether I stay in the flesh or go into the spirit world, or whether in the resurrected world, depend upon it, while my name is Parley P. Pratt, I will be somewhere about."

This article draws heavily upon Terryl L. Givens and Matthew J. Grow *Parley P. Pratt: The Apostle Paul of Mormonism* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2011).

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Excerpts of Letters

written by

Parley P. Pratt

during his Missouri
incarceration

by Alexander L. Baugh

While Parley P. Pratt was incarcerated in Missouri during 1838—1839, he wrote a number of letters to his wife Mary Ann and to his in-laws. Excerpts from some of these letters follow.

On November 4, 1838, Parley penned the first of six extant letters written to his wife Mary Ann Frost Stearns Pratt: "Our greatest pain is for our families and the Church, knowing that you are exposed to danger[,] to famine, and perhaps to death. But we can only pray for you, and leave you in the hand of God, and pray the Lord God bless and preserve you and us and speedily restore us to the bosom of our families. . . . Be assured that whether we meet again in this life or not, I trust in the living God whether in life or in death, and I feel resigned to his will. ... It is for you and the little ones, that I still desire to live. And my prayer to God is that he will preserve me and my family and let us live in each others embraces."

Seven letters and a legal petition that Parley wrote during his six-month Richmond incarceration have survived. The first, dated December 1, 1838, instructed Mary Ann to bring herself and the children to the jail to board with him. The second letter, December 9, 1838, was addressed to Mary Ann's parents, Aaron and Susannah Frost: "I feel firm In the faith of the fullness of the Gospel. . . . For Me to live is Christ and to dye is gain; and I fear none but God. I have thus far kept the faith; faught the good fight And I Intend to finish my Course with Joy."

In a December 9 letter to Nancy Haven Rockwood, wife of Albert Perry Rockwood, another Mormon prisoner, he explained that persecution against the Saints was a sign that the work was true, for the early Christians also suffered for Christ's sake: "The Blood of the Latterday . . . Saints is now mingled with the Blood of Former Day Saints, in cries to heave for vengeance upon an Ungodly World." Parley ended the letter in melancholy verse—

"As dawn a long Dungeon with darkness are spread In silence and sorrow I made my lone bead [bed] Far[,] far from the scenes of confusion retired While hope from this bosom had almost expired.

From all that is lovely
constrained far to part
From the friends of my bosom
so dear to my heart
While Jesus exulting,
and friends far away
In half broken slumbers
all pensive I lay

A light from Heaven on sud[den] appeared.

And a voice as of Angels stole soft on my ear A theme full of Glory, inspired their tongue Of Zion's Redemption most sweetly they sung

Parley's reply to a letter from Mary Ann dated April 26: "I generally go to sleep with my thoughts draw[n] out in prair [prayer] for you and the children; and In my night visions I often See you and my little babes, but it is allways at a distance . . . which forever disappoints me in my dreams. O Mary, why do you forever fly from my visionary persuit, But nevermind, dreams are nothing; it is your own dear self, in Open day that I wish to see."

On May 22, 1839, Parley encouraged Mary to come to live at the jail in Columbia: "If I Stay here Long I shall want to see you here. . . . I hardly know which I want to See most, My dear wife, My Lovely daughter, or my little babes. I Cannot ask you to part with either of them for my sake for they all need a mothers care and attention. But however you must act [on] your own judgement."

June 8 Parley noted to Mary Ann the compassionate and civilized treatment exhibited to them by the jailer and the sheriff: "We are treated with every kindness here. . . . The Jailor boards us as well as we can ask and does every thing in his power to make us comfortable. . . . The sheriff . . . brings us new[s]papers and enquires after our comfort and the cleanliness of the prison." The local citizenry also appeared to be more well-mannered than those in northern Missouri. "We have not received a single Impolite word from any boddy Since we have been here,"

DIARY ENTRY

he continued. "The people in the streets always appear Civil, there is no noisy profaneity. And Such a thing as a pistol or any weapon to guard us we have never seen Since we bid farewell to our Savage nabours of the upper Country. . . . We without any examination . . . [and] enjoy the Liberty to Speak and write, a privilege which relieves my full heart Like the Steem blowing from an over charged boiler. It will take a number of months at least to give full vent and exercise to the Smuthered feelings of Liberty and patriotism which have so Long Slept in my bosom."

Parley's final Missouri imprisonment letter [from Columbia Jail, June 17] was to Mary Ann's parents: "I Know, and am a witness, that God has sent forth the Book of Mormon and raised up his Church, in order to gather his sheep into [one] fold that they may be prepared for his coming.—And I ferther Know that [the] modern sistems of Religion partake much of mans inventions [an]d [tr] aditions, wherein many points of the doctrine of Jesus Christ is neglected or pe[r]vorted, and those sistems will not stand the test of that coming day when nothing but truth will stand. [N] ow those who fight against this [work] fight against God And those who neglect this work, neglect the things that belong to their own enternal [eternal] welf[are]. The persecutions that are [heaped] upon us are enough to prove much in our favour [a]s being the C[hristian] Church, for there is not a single sect in American who are [called] to endure the like."

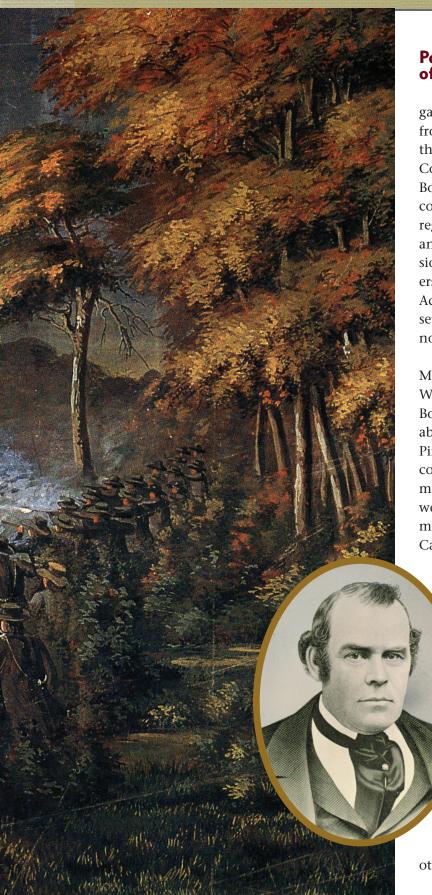
PARLEY P. PRATT'S 1SSOUT1 IMPRISONMENT 1838-1839 BY ALEXANDER L. BAUGH, BYU professor of Church History and Doctrine The Missouri period of early Mormonism (1831–39) has often been considered the darkest era in the Church's history. During these years, Latter-day Saints hoped to establish a Mormon utopia in Missouri's western region, but such efforts led to misunderstandings, jealousies, mob action,

Parley P. Pratt played a prominent role in a number of the events associated with the 1838 Mormon–Missouri conflict, particularly the Battle of Crooked River, and it was this encounter that subsequently led to his arrest and an eight-month imprisonment in Missouri's jails.²

Lilburn W. Boggs.¹

destruction of property, and killings. These final events culminated in the expulsion of the Latter-day Saint community in early 1839 by order of the state's chief executive, Missouri governor

THE BATTLE OF CROOKED RIVER, by C. C. A. Christensen



Parley P. Pratt and the Battle of Crooked River

On October 23, 1838, Captain Samuel Bogart of the Ray County militia received orders from Major-General David R. Atchison to patrol the line running between Caldwell and Ray Counties. Upon receiving Atchison's orders, Bogart acted quickly. The following day, his company, comprising 35 men, appeared in the region, threatening Latter-day Saint families and warning them to leave or suffer repercussions. Bogart also took three Mormon prisoners—Nathan Pinkham Jr., William Seely, and Addison Green. That evening, the Ray militia set up camp on Crooked River in the extreme northwest corner of the county.

During the evening of October 24, several Mormon messengers made their way to Far West, bringing word to Church leaders about Bogart's activities and the approximate whereabouts of his company. It was also reported that Pinkham, Seely, and Green were to be tried by court-martial and would be shot the following morning. Believing the lives of the three men were in imminent danger, Mormon leaders made the decision to call out a company of Caldwell County militia to disperse the mob and rescue the men. Mormon apostle David

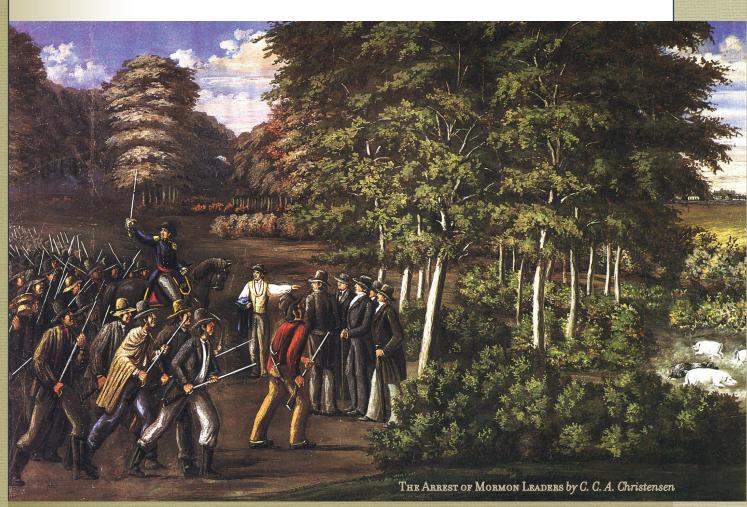
W. Patten was placed in command of the operation. Pratt was one of the 75 men who responded to the call-out.

During the early morning hours of October 25, the Mormon militia encountered the Ray militia at Crooked River and a full-scale contest ensued. In the end, the Mormons succeeded in routing the Missourians and rescuing the prisoners, but three members of their company were killed, including Patten, Patterson O'Banion, and Gideon Carter. Nine other Mormons were wounded. Bogart's company suffered one fatality—Moses Roland. Six others in the Ray militia were wounded.³

The battle between Bogart's Ray County militia and Patten's Caldwell County militia marked a turning point in the 1838 Mormon– Missouri conflict. Reports of the contest were immediately dispatched to the office of Missouri governor Lilburn W. Boggs. Upon learning of the most recent events in the civil conflict, Boggs decided to take aggressive action. Based upon the report he received, the governor perceived that the Mormons had come out in open rebellion against the state of Missouri by deliberately attacking authorized militia—an act he viewed unlawful and treasonous—hence his written statement: "The Mormons [are] in the attitude of an open and avowed defiance of the laws, and of having made war upon the people of this state. . . . The Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the state."4

Mormon Surrender at Far West

By October 30, three days after the Missouri governor learned of Bogart's defeat, twenty-five hundred state troops had assembled on the outskirts of Far West to ensure that the governor's orders were carried out. The day before issuing the "Extermination Order," Boggs relieved General Atchison of his command of the state militia in the northern district.⁵ Atchison's release probably stemmed from the fact that he had served as legal counsel to Joseph Smith and was at least partially sympathetic to the Mormons. Boggs replaced Atchison with Major-General John B. Clark from Howard County. However, because Clark was not on the scene to take charge, Samuel D. Lucas, commander of the Jackson County troops and a major-general in the Missouri militia, assumed command.



Significantly, it was not until October 30, the day before the Mormon surrender, that Latter-day Saint leaders learned the battle at Crooked River was against authorized state militia, not local vigilantes. Believing that those who had taken part could face criminal charges, Mormon leaders encouraged the members of Patten's company to get out of Far West and leave the state immediately. For some reason, Pratt chose not to go. Had he done so, he probably would have avoided incarceration.

Pratt's Arrest

General Lucas thought the chief instigators behind the Mormon insurgence were Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Lyman Wight, Amasa M. Lyman, George W. Robinson, and Parley P. Pratt. Joseph Smith, Rigdon, and Hyrum Smith comprised the Church's First Presidency. George W. Robinson was the Prophet's secretary. Lyman Wight was the highest-ranking Mormon militia officer in Daviess County. Amasa Lyman was a leader of a Mormon spy company that reconnoitered throughout southern Caldwell and northern Ray Counties during the days just preceding the Mormon surrender. Finally, Pratt had been a participant in the battle at Crooked River. October 31, 1838, marks the beginning of Pratt's Missouri imprisonment, a period that would last eight months and four days.

On the evening of November 1, Lucas made a rash decision to hold a military court for the seven prisoners. He believed he had to act quickly—before General Clark arrived and while he still had command of the operation—because Clark, who was less familiar with the Mormon problem, might be disposed to render more lenient justice in behalf of the Church's leaders. At the time of the hearing, Joseph Smith and his cohorts were in custody at

Alexander W. Doniphan,
circa 1861. Doniphan acted
as chief legal counsel to the
Mormons in Missouri from
1833–39 and represented the
Mormon defendants during the
Richmond preliminary hearing.
Photograph by Mathew Brady,
courtesy Library of Congress.

Alexander W. Doniphan's camp and were not even allowed to be present to defend themselves.⁶

The deliberation did not last long. Upon hearing the evidence, Lucas called for a vote from officers of the court, who voted three to one in favor of conviction on the charge of treason—a capital offense.7 Doniphan vehemently opposed the decision, telling his fellow officers that not one of them was familiar with military law, and then left the hearing in protest.8 Nonetheless, with the verdict rendered, Lucas drafted the execution order and dispatched it to Doniphan, expecting compliance. The order read: "Brigadier-General Donipan. —Sir: You will take Joseph Smith and the other prisoners into the public square of Far West, and shoot them at 9 o'clock to-morrow morning. [Signed] Samuel D. Lucas Major-General commanding."9

Doniphan was not about to be an accessory to such an order and issued a brusque response. Not only did he inform Lucas that he considered the order illegal and that he would not obey it, but he threatened legal action if the executions were carried out. The illegality of the order centered on the fact that at least three of the prisoners, namely, Joseph, and Hyrum, and Sidney Rigdon of the First Presidency, claimed exemption from state militia service and therefore did not come under military authority.

However, the same was not true for the other four prisoners—Lyman Wight, Parley P. Pratt, George W. Robinson, and Amasa Lyman—each of whom were commissioned

or elected state militia officers. In spite of the fact that four of the seven could have come under military authority, Doniphan's dauntless refusal to carry out Lucas's order, in addition to his warning that he would pursue legal action if the executions were carried out, led Lucas to reconsider his decision and to decide ultimately to keep all seven Mormon men in custody until they could be turned over to the appropriate civil authorities.¹⁰

Pratt's Incarceration at Independence

During the forenoon of November 2, a heavily guarded wagon containing the seven Mormon prisoners pulled into Far West, where they were allowed to return to their homes to get some clothing and other necessities and to say good-bye to their families. 11 After they reassembled, Lucas put Brigadier General Moses Wilson in charge of three hundred men and assigned him to take the Mormon leaders to Independence while he finalized the surrender. 12 The journey from Far West to Independence took the better part of two days before the Mormon prisoners arrived on the afternoon of Sunday, November 4. The prisoners were immediately incarcerated in a vacant log house just north and across the street from Independence's public square and courthouse.13 That same day, General Clark arrived at Far West, where he supervised the final activities of the Mormon surrender and made additional arrests—46 total. When Clark learned that Lucas had taken the seven prisoners to Jackson County, he sent a small detachment to Independence with orders for Lucas to turn over the prisoners so they could be taken to Richmond for examination.14 On November 7, Clark's men arrived in Independence and took charge of the prisoners. Accordingly, the next day, accompanied by a small military escort, they proceeded 15 miles,

crossed the Missouri River, and lodged that evening in an old frame house. The following day, November 9, while en route to Richmond, they were met by a strong guard commanded by Colonel Price, who conducted them the rest of the way.

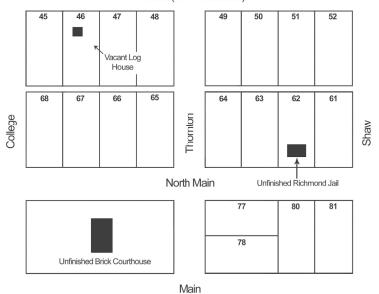
Pratt's Incarceration at Richmond

Upon their arrival at the Ray County seat, the seven Mormon leaders were put into an old log house situated 20 rods (330 feet), about one block north, of Richmond's public square and courthouse, where they were placed under a guard and chained together in heavy irons. ¹⁵ For three weeks (November 9–29) the log house served as the ad hoc jail. Athalia R. Robinson, Rigdon's 17-year-old daughter and wife of George Robinson, also lodged with the prisoners for a time. Because of Rigdon's tenuous health, Athalia was permitted to take care of her ailing father and to be with her husband. ¹⁶

At the time the Mormon defendants were brought to Richmond for the preliminary hearing, Major-General Clark was still uncertain whether the case surrounding the Mormons should come under civil or military laws. In the

Richmond, Missouri 1838-39

Locust (now Buchanan)



meantime, fifth district circuit court judge Austin A. King ruled that the civil courts had jurisdiction, and the Richmond Court of Inquiry convened to examine the charges levied against the Mormons and to determine if there were probable cause to bind the defendants over for trial. Thomas Burch and William T. Wood prosecuted in behalf of the state. The Mormon prisoners were represented by Alexander Doniphan and Amos Rees.17

When the preliminary hearing in Richmond began, 53 Mormons were in state custody. During the course of the hearing, 11 more were subsequently arrested, bringing the total number of Mormon defendants to 64. Whereas Pratt and the six other Mormon leaders were held in an old log house north of the courthouse, the remaining 57 Mormon defendants were housed in the courthouse itself, which was under construction. The Richmond preliminary hearing began on November 12 and continued through November 29.

Cometime during their three-week confine-• ment in the vacant log house, Parley P. Pratt later reported that one evening Joseph Smith issued a scathing rebuke of the militia guards:

"In one of those tedious nights we had lain as if in sleep, till the hour of midnight had passed, and our ears and hearts had been pained, while we had listened for hours to the obscene jests, the horrid oaths, the dreadful blasphemies, and filthy language of our guards, Col. Price at their head, as they recounted to each other their deeds of rapine, murder, robbery, etc., which they had committed among the 'Mormons,' while at Far West, and vicinity. They even boasted of defiling by force, wives, daughters, and virgins, and of shooting or dashing out the brains of men, women, and children. I had listened till I became so

Austin A. King, circa 1862–63, presided over the Richmond preliminary hearing (November 12-29, 1838). He later served as governor of Missouri (1848–53) and as a member of the U.S. Congress (1862-63). Photograph courtesy Library of Congress.

disgusted, shocked, horrified, and so filled with the spirit of indignant justice, that I could scarcely refrain from rising upon my feet and rebuking the guards. . . . On a sudden [Joseph] arose to his feet and spoke in a voice of thunder, or as the roaring lion, uttering, as near as I can recollect, the following words:

"'SILENCE—Ye fiends of the infernal pit. In the name of Jesus Christ I rebuke you, and command you to be still; I will not live another minute, and hear such language. Cease such talk, or you or I die THIS MINUTE.'

"He ceased to speak. He stood erect in terrible majesty. Chained, and without a weapon,—calm, unruffled and dignified as an angel, he looked down upon the quailing guards, whose weapons were lowered or dropped to the ground; whose knees smote together, and who, shrinking into a corner, or crouching at his feet, begged his pardon, and remained quiet till a change of guards.

"I have seen the ministers of justice, clothed in magisterial robes, and criminals arraigned before them, while life was suspended upon a breath, in the courts of England; I have witnessed a Congress in solemn session to give laws to nations; I have tried to conceive of kings, of royal courts, of thrones, and crowns; and of emperors assembled to decide the fate of kingdoms, but dignity and majesty have I seen but once, as it stood in chains, at midnight, in a dungeon, in an obscure village of Missouri."18

At the conclusion of the Richmond hearing, the court released 29 of the 64 Mormon



defendants. However, Judge King determined that sufficient evidence existed to bind 35 over for trial. Hence, 24 Mormons were bound over. These defendants were charged with arson, burglary, larceny, and robbery—all bailable offenses—and ordered to appear at the circuit court in Daviess County on March 28, 1839.19 Probable cause was also found against Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Hyrum Smith, Lyman Wight, Alexander McCrae, and Caleb Baldwin on the charge of treason, a non-bailable offense. Because there was no jail in Daviess, King ordered the men be taken to Liberty jail in Clay County to await their court appearance on March 7, 1839.20 These six Mormon leaders began their confinement on December 1.21 Finally, King ruled there was sufficient evidence to charge five men—Pratt, Norman Shearer, Darwin Chase, Luman Gibbs, and Morris Phelpsin the death of Moses Rowland, which occurred during the attack at Crooked River. Because the charge of murder was non-bailable, these five men were ordered to remain confined in the Richmond jail until March 11, 1839, when the circuit trial would convene there.²²

Immediately after the Richmond hearing, Pratt was one of the 18 prisoners who remained incarcerated. Most of the men were soon released on bail, leaving only the five who had participated in the Crooked River battle: Luman Gibbs (the oldest who was described by Pratt as being in his 50s), Morris Phelps (age 32), Pratt (age 31), Darwin Chase (age 22), and the youngest, Norman B. Shearer (age 17).

Pratt would spend the next six months in the jail, which he described as "somewhat open and cold." Fortunately, however, the sheriff had supplied them with plenty of food and drink and assured them he would provide them with a good stove and an ample supply of wood. Pratt requested that his wife Mary Ann come live with him in the jail, a practice sometimes allowed in those days, depending on the character of the defendant, the severity of the crime, and the disposition of the judge, sheriff, and prison officers.

In a letter to Mary Ann, Parley informed her that the authorities would permit her to come. "It is now at your own choice to come and spend the winter with me; or to live a lonely widow on a desolate prairiee, where you are not secured of a living, or protection," a lonely Pratt wrote. He instructed her to bring a bed, bedding, clothing, a table, plates, basins, books, pens, and paper. "You need not be afraid of the old jail for it is better than the hut where you now live."²³ A daughter also named Mary Ann, and an infant son, Nathan, came with Mary Ann to Richmond and moved into the jail with him and the other prisoners.²⁴

Luman Gibbs's wife Phila was also permitted to live in the jail. Morris Phelps's wife Laura visited the jail regularly and on occasion stayed a few days. Neither Chase nor Shearer appears to have been married. Mary Ann and the two children stayed with Pratt in the jail until March. 17, 1839, a period of just over three months.

One can only imagine the monotony that comes with imprisonment. However, Pratt found good use of his time. During the three months Mary Ann shared the jail with her husband, Pratt wrote the majority of the manuscript for what became the book *History of the Late Persecution Inflicted by the State of Missouri upon the Mormons*. The guards were well aware Pratt was drafting some sort of manuscript and assured him that whatever he had written would be confiscated. When word came that the sheriff was coming to seize the papers, Pratt and Mary Ann had already conceived a plan for her to take the writings out of the jail by attaching a pillowcase containing his papers

to her underclothing. About the same time the sheriff arrived at the jail, the Pratts' six-year-old daughter was ascending the ladder to the main floor when the trapdoor accidently came down, injuring her head and arm. The accident created enough of a distraction that Mary Ann was able to carry the little girl outside without being searched by the guards. She then took the papers to the home of Sylvester B. Stoddard, a friend of the Pratts who lived a half mile from the jail, and left the writings with him. Fortunately, the daughter's injuries were not serious.²⁵

On March 12, 1839, King Follett (age 51), one of the Mormon defendants tried during the November hearings but released, was indicted by a Caldwell County grand jury for robbery. Two days later, he was put in the Richmond Jail with the other Mormon prisoners, bringing the number of inmates to six. ²⁶ For some unknown reason, Follett was arrested a second time; this time he was bound over

for trial. On March 17, three days after Follett was brought to the jail, Mary Ann Pratt and her children left the jail and returned to Far West to make preparations to leave the state.²⁷

On April 22,
Darwin Chase and
Norman Shearer
were released,
having spent
nearly five
months in the
Richmond jail.²⁸
Shortly after Chase
and Shearer's release,
probably the last week
in April, Pratt experienced a remarkable vision

of his departed first wife Thankful

Mary Ann Frost Stearns Pratt, courtesy Jane W. Fife



Halsey from whom he learned that he would eventually be released.29

On May 13, Pratt wrote an outspoken letter to Judge King in which he lashed out regarding the treatment and injustices he and the Mormon people had received from Missouri's citizens, the militia, the judges (including King), the state legislature, and governors Dunklin and Boggs. Pratt seemed perturbed that he and his three other prison companions were the only Mormons still incarcerated.30 Clearly, his patience with the law and the courts was growing thin. Pratt requested that he either be banished from the state or be allowed a hearing before a federal judge. Four days later (May 17), the four Mormon prisoners met personally with King and presented him with a formal request for a change of venue because the citizens were "so much prejudiced against them ... that they cannot have a fair and impartial trial."31 The judge complied with their request and ordered the prisoners be taken to Columbia, Boone County, for their final hearing.³²

Pratt's Incarceration at Columbia

On May 22, 1839, Benjamin Brown, the Ray County sheriff, and four guards chained Pratt, Phelps, Gibbs, Follett together, two to two, loaded them into a carriage, and started for Boone County.³³ The party arrived in Columbia on Sunday, May 26.

Shortly after their arrival in Columbia, the prisoners learned that the next session of the district court was not scheduled until September 23, nearly four months away. Anxious to have the date moved up,

The original Columbia, **Boone County Jail** was located on the northwest corner of the public square, about where the west wing of the current office complex is situated (see marked square).

the prisoners petitioned for a special session, which was granted.³⁴ On June 7, Judge Thomas Reynolds, of Howard County, scheduled a special term of the court for Monday, July 1.35

The next day, June 8, filled with optimism, Pratt wrote Mary Ann to inform her that a date had finally been set for their case to be heard, then noted the compassionate and civilized treatment exhibited to them by the jailor and the sheriff: "We are treated with every kindness here," Pratt wrote. "The Jailor boards us as well as we can ask and does every thing in his power to make us comfortable. . . . The sheriff . . . brings us new[s]papers and enquires after our comfort and the cleanliness of the prison." The local citizenry also appeared to be more wellmannered than those in northern Missouri. "We have not received a single Impolite word from any boddy Since we have been here," Pratt continued. "The people in the streets always appear Civil, there is no noisy profaneity. And Such a thing as a pistol or any weapon to guard us we have never seen Since we bid farewell to our Savage nabours of the upper Country."

Whatever optimism Pratt and the other prisoners felt during the month of June was relatively short lived. When the court convened on July 1, a number of prosecution witnesses were present, but none of the witnesses for the defendants appeared. With no witnesses, the attorneys for the Mormons recommended that

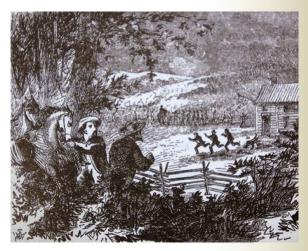


they not go ahead with the hearing at that time and requested the hearing be rescheduled for September 23, the date for the regular term of the court.36

The postponement and the prospects of spending three more months in jail were too much for Pratt and his prison companions. Convinced justice was not on their side, and feeling divinely directed, Pratt, Phelps, and Follett made immediate plans to attempt a jailbreak. By this time, the fourth prisoner, Luman Gibbs, had turned apostate and was excluded in the get-away scheme.³⁷ With the help of Orson Pratt (Parley's younger brother), Laura Clark Phelps (wife of Morris Phelps), and John Wesley Clark (Laura's brother), each of whom had traveled to Columbia to be present for the July 1 court hearing, plans were put into place for an escape on July 4.

Thursday, July 4, 1839, marked the 63rd anniversary of America's independence, and the Mormon prisoners commemorated the event with their own expectation of deliverance. The day previous, with the help of Orson and John, the prisoners secured a few items to make a "Liberty flag," which they proudly hung from one of the jail's windows. Little did the citizens of Boone County realize that the Mormons were proclaiming that this day would be their own day of liberty.

As evening approached, final preparations were put in place for the escape. Orson and John had saddled three horses and secluded them in a thicket located about a half mile from the jail where they awaited the arrival of the escapees. Near sunset the jailor, John Martin, came with the evening victuals. After unlocking the main jail door to pass the coffee pot through, Follett flung the door open, Phelps grabbed hold of Martin, and the escape was on. All three men made a sprint to the thicket. Unfortunately, Follett, the oldest and probably the slowest of the three, was recaptured almost immediately, but Pratt and Phelps



Engraving which appeared in Parley P. Pratt's Autobiography illustrating the Mormon prisoner's July 4, 1839, escape from the Columbia Jail.

were successful in mounting the horses and getting away. After six adventuresome days and several close calls, both men made their way independent of each other to Quincy, Illinois, where they were reunited with family and friends.³⁸ Follett remained in the Columbia Jail until September 25, 1839, when his case was heard and he was acquitted and released. The apostate, Luman Gibbs, remained incarcerated until November 4, 1839.39

Conclusion

Parley P. Pratt believed the charges issued against him by Missouri's authorities were not because of any illegal activity on his part but centered on religious persecution, and therefore any criminal allegations against him were unwarranted. Believing he was innocent, he also felt justice would be on his side and he would eventually be acquitted in the courts. However, after several failed attempts to obtain an impartial hearing, Pratt felt justified in securing his personal freedom by flight rather than submitting to what he believed was an inequitable justice system.

No attempt was ever made by Missouri authorities to extradite the two escapees, Pratt and Phelps, from Illinois, although a Missouri court document shows that papers were filed on

October 6, 1839, in Boone County to have the two men appear before the Adams County, Illinois, circuit court. It appears likely that the papers were never even executed. That Follett was acquitted and Gibbs was subsequently released suggests that by late 1839, Missouri officials were content to drop everything in connection with charges made against Pratt and the others.

1 For a more comprehensive examination of the Mormon War, see Alexander L. Baugh, *A Call to Arms: The 1838 Mormon Defense of Northern Missouri* (Provo: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute and BYU Studies, 2000); and Stephen C. LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri* (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1987).

2 A more detailed treatise on Pratt's Missouri imprisonment is in Alexander L. Baugh, "The Final Episode of Mormonism in Missouri in the 1830s: The Incarceration of the Mormon Prisoners at Richmond and Columbia Jails, 1838–1839," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 28 (2008): 1–34.

3 For a historical examination of the Crooked River encounter, see Alexander L. Baugh, "The Battle between Mormon and Missouri Militia at Crooked River," in *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint History: Missouri*, ed. Arnold K. Garr and Clark V. Johnson (Provo: BYU, 1994), 85–103.

4 Lilburn W. Boggs to John B. Clark, Oct. 27, 1838, in *Document Containing the Correspondence, Orders, &c. in Relation to the Disturbances with the Mormons . . . on the Trial of Joseph Smith, Jr., and Others, for High Treason and Other Crimes Against the State* (Fayette, MO: Boonslick Democrat, 1841), 61 (hereafter cited as *Document*).

5 Boggs to Clark, Oct. 26, 1838, in *Document*, 62–63.

6 Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, ed. Parley P. Pratt Jr. (New York: Russell Brothers, 1874), 205; and Sidney Rigdon, *An Appeal to the American People* (Cincinnati: Glezen and Shepard, 1840), 51.

7 See History of Clay and Platte Counties, Missouri (St. Louis: National Historical Co., 1885), 134 n1.

8 Rigdon, *An Appeal*, 51; and Rigdon petition in Clark S. Johnson, *Mormon Redress Petitions: Documents of the 1833–1838 Missouri Conflict* (Provo: BYU, 1992), 675–76; and Parley P. Pratt, *History of*

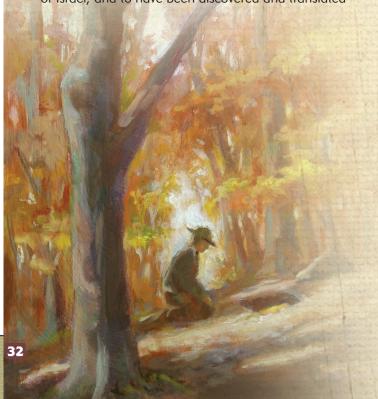
An Angel from on High

by R. Steven Pratt, author and historian

Parley P. Pratt, author of some of the best-loved hymn texts of the Restoration period, used his poetic gifts to give voice to the revelatory and other foundational elements of the early Church. Parley considered himself a wandering pilgrim sent to preach to a fallen world, and he often taught through poems, recounting many of his crucial life experiences in poetic form. Parley published two separate editions of his only book of poems, The Millennium. . . . At least 65 poems by "the Poetic Apostle" have been adapted as hymn texts and published in the successive LDS hymn collections since 1835.1

"In August, 1830, I had closed my business, completed my arrangements, and we bid adieu to our wilderness home and never saw it afterwards. . . . We launched forth into the wide world, determining . . . to visit . . . places as I might be led to by the Holy Spirit.

"... It was early in the morning, just at the dawn of day; I walked ten miles into the country, and stopped to breakfast with a Mr. Wells ... [who afterwards] readily accompanied me through the neighborhood to visit the people We visited an old Baptist Deacon by the name of Hamlin ... [who] began to tell of a book, a STRANGE BOOK, a VERY STRANGE BOOK! in his possession, which had been just published. This book, he said, purported to have been originally written on plates either of gold or brass, by a branch of the tribes of Israel; and to have been discovered and translated



by a young man near Palmyra, in the State of New York, by the aid of visions, or the ministry of angels. I inquired of him how or where the book was to be obtained. He promised me the perusal of it, at his house the next day, if I would call. I felt a strange interest in the book. . . . Next morning I called at his house, where, for the first time, my eyes beheld the 'BOOK OF MORMON,' that book of books—that record which reveals the antiquities of the 'New World' back to the remotest ages, and which unfolds the destiny of its people and the world for all time to come; that Book which contains the fullness of the gospel of a crucified and risen Redeemer; that Book which reveals a lost remnant of Joseph, and which was the principal means, in the hands of God, of directing the entire course of my future life.

"I opened it with eagerness, and read its title page. I then read the testimony of several witnesses in relation to the manner of its being found and translated. After this I commenced its contents by course. I read all day; eating was a burden. I had no desire for food; sleep was a burden when the night came, for I preferred reading to sleep.

"As I read, the spirit of the Lord was upon me, and I knew and comprehended that the book was true, as plainly and manifestly as a man comprehends and knows that he exists. My joy was now full, as it were, and I rejoiced sufficiently to more than pay me for all the sorrows, sacrifices and toils of my life.²

"The long night of darkness is now far spent—the truth revived in its primitive simplicity and purity, like the day-star of the horizon, lights up the dawn of that effulgent morn when the knowledge of God will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. It has pleased the Almighty to send forth an HOLY ANGEL, to restore the fullness of the gospel with all its attendant blessings, to bring together his wandering sheep into one fold, to restore to them 'the faith which was once delivered to the saints,' and to send his servants in these last days, with a special message to all the nations of the earth, in order to prepare all who will hearken for the Second Advent of Messiah, which is now near at hand."

An Angel from on High

by Parley P. Pratt

An angel from on high
The long, long silence broke;
Descending from the sky,
These gracious words he spoke:
Lo! in Cumorah's lonely hill
A sacred record lies concealed.

Sealed by Moroni's hand,
It has for ages lain
To wait the Lord's command,
From dust to speak again.
It shall again to light come forth
To usher in Christ's reign on earth.

It speaks of Joseph's seed
And makes the remnant known
Of nations long since dead,
Who once had dwelt alone.
The fulness of the gospel, too,
Its pages will reveal to view.

The time is now fulfilled,
The long-expected day;
Let earth obedience yield
And darkness flee away.
Remove the seals; be wide unfurled
Its light and glory to the world.

Lo! Israel filled with joy
Shall now be gathered home,
Their wealth and means employ
To build Jerusalem,
While Zion shall arise and shine
And fill the earth with truth divine.4

4 Hymns of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985), no. 13.

Left: artwork by Brooke Malia. Upper right corner, detail from Among the Sierra Nevada, California by Albert Bierstadt

¹ Shane J. Chism, A Selection of Early Mormon Hymnbooks, 1832–1872: Hymnbooks and Broadsides from the first 40 Years of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Privately printed, 2011), 304–41.

² Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, ed. Parley P. Pratt, Jr. (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1985), 18–20.

³ Parley P. Pratt, Prospectus of the Latter-day Saint Millennial Star, April 1840.

the Late Persecution Inflicted by the State of Missouri upon the Mormons (Detroit: Dawson and Bates, 1839), 40.

9 History of Caldwell and Livingston Counties, Missouri (St. Louis: National Historical Co., 1886), 137.

10 The significance of Doniphan's intervention in behalf of the Mormon leaders cannot be overstated. Had Doniphan not blocked Lucas, Joseph Smith and the other prisoners would most assuredly have lost their lives.

11 Pratt wrote a heart-wrenching description of the scene in his *Autobiography*, 207.

12 See Samuel D. Lucas to Boggs, Nov. 2, 1838, in *Document*, 75.

13 Lyman Wight, Journal, in Joseph Smith III and Heman C. Smith, *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, 8 vols. (Independence, MO: Herald House, 1967), 2:295–96; Pratt, *Autobiography*, 212. On November 6, following two days of confinement in the log house, the seven prisoners were moved a short distance east to the Noland House (hotel), situated on the northwest corner of Main and Maple.

14 See Clark to Boggs, Nov. 10, 1838, in *Document*, 66; and Clark to Boggs, Nov. 29, 1838, in *Document*, 90.

15 Pratt, Autobiography, 216; Wight, 296–98.

16 Pratt, Autobiography, 228.

17 *Document*, 97. For an examination of the Richmond preliminary hearing, see Stephen C. LeSueur, "'High Treason and Murder': The Examination of Mormon Prisoners at Richmond, Missouri, in Nov. 1838," *BYU Studies* 26, no. 2 (spring 1986): 3–30; and H. Michael Marquardt, "Judge Austin A. King's Preliminary Hearing: Joseph Smith and the Mormons on Trial," *JWHA Journal* 24 (2004): 41–55.

18 Pratt to Willard Richards, 3; Pratt, *Autobiography*, 179–80.

19 Document, 150. By the time the Daviess trial was to begin, most of the defendants had left the state; thus they did not appear and the case was eventually dismissed.

20 Document, 150.

21 For an examination of the Liberty jail experience, see Dean C. Jessee, "'Walls, Grates, and Screeking Iron Doors': The Prison Experience of Mormon Leaders in Missouri, 1838–1839," in *New Views in Mormon History: A Collection of Essays in Honor of Leonard J. Arrington,*

Truth Eternal, Truth Divine [Rock of Ages] by R. Steven Pratt

In 1849, 10 years after the horrors of the late Missouri period, the Saints were securely settled in Utah's Rocky Mountains, never forcibly to be moved again. Knowing the Saints' earlier history as he did, and having suffered alongside his family and friends and the larger body of the Saints, Parley naturally rejoiced in the Saints' newfound freedom to form communities and to worship God as He commanded.

In the following paragraphs are Parley's words in a March 1849 letter to fellow members of the Quorum of the Twelve, Orson Hyde, George A. Smith and Ezra T. Benson. The words anticipate the spirit and theme of Parley's 1852 hymn, "The Triumph of Truth," and its bold opening line, "Rock of Ages, Truth Divine!" Now shortened and revised as "Truth Eternal, Truth Divine," the hymn continues to inspire humble gratitude for the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

"We are now about five thousand in number—five

ed. Davis Bitton and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher (Salt Lake City: Univ. of Utah Press, 1987), 19–42.

22 Document, 150.

23 Pratt to Mary Ann Frost Stearns Pratt, Dec. 1, 1838, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as CHL). Mary Ann Frost Stearns Pratt was Parley's second wife. Pratt's first marriage was to Thankful Halsey on September 9, 1827. She died in Kirtland, Ohio, March 25, 1837. Six weeks after her death Pratt married Mary Ann Frost Stearns on May 9, 1837. Previous to her marriage to Pratt, Mary Ann had married Nathan Stearns April 1, 1832. Nathan died on August 25, 1833.

24 The daughter mentioned here was Mary Ann Stearns, born April 6, 1833, to Mary Ann Frost Stearns and her first husband, Nathan Stearns, and therefore would have been Pratt's stepdaughter. Nathan Pratt, born August 31, 1838, would have been only three months old. Pratt's oldest child, Parley P. Pratt Jr. was born on March 25, 1837, to Pratt's first wife, Thankful Halsey, who died three hours after giving birth. Following Thankful's death, Parley Jr., was placed in the care of a woman by the name of Allen who had lost a son. See Pratt, *Autobiography*, 182. The fact that Parley

thousand industrious, enterprising Americans and Europeans living isolated and alone in the midst of vast and almost unbroken solitudes which extend near one thousand miles on every hand with no other civilized settlements. So you see at once that we are not only a small nation, but a small world, almost as much by ourselves as if translated to another planet.

"Here we dwell in peace—the fertile valleys are our inheritance—while the eternal mountains of Jehovah are round about us, rearing their majestic heads far above the clouds, and piercing the regions of eternal snow. Broadhigh—eternal and sublime, the Rock of Ages, and the twin of time. These mountains are our bulwarks of freedom and our towers of strength. They are the walls of defense prepared by the Almighty to shield the sons and daughters of freedom when its purest principles are trampled underfoot and no longer held sacred among the sons of men. Here, in this lone solitude is peace and quiet for the Saints of God."2

1 Parley P. Pratt, "The Triumph of Truth," Deseret News, Nov. 6, 1852, 101. 2 Parley P. Pratt to Orson Hyde, George A. Smith, and Ezra T. Benson, March 1849, Orson Hyde Papers, LDS Church History Library.

Truth Eternal

by Parley P. Pratt

Truth eternal, truth divine, In thine ancient fullness shine! Burst the fetters of the mind From the millions of mankind!

Truth again restored to earth, Opened with a prophet's birth. Priests of heaven's royal line Bear the keys of truth divine!

Truth shall triumph as the light Chases far the misty night. Endless ages own its sway, Clad in everlasting day.3

3 Hymns of the Church, no. 4.

makes no mention of Parley Jr. suggests the boy was still being cared for.

25 See Pratt, History, 66-68.

26 Morris Phelps, Reminiscences and Journal, typescript, item 3, 21, CHL.

27 See Pratt, History, 58.

28 See Pratt, History, 58; also Pratt, Autobiography, 246. See also Laura Clark Phelps to John Cooper, June 1839, CHL; also Boone County, MO., Circuit Court Records, Miscellaneous, Case No. 1379, fld. 11, Ellis Library, Columbia. MO (hereafter cited as Boone Court Records).

29 See Pratt, Autobiography, 261-62.

30 Pratt to Austin A. King, May 13, 1839, in Pratt, History, 80-83.

31 Petition of Parley P. Pratt, Morris Phelps, and Luman Gibbs to Austin A. King, May 17, 1839, in Boone Court Records, Case No. 1379, fld. 10. The petition appears to be in the handwriting of Pratt. A separate petition was prepared for King Follett. See Boone Court Records, Case No. 1380, fld. 20.

32 Austin A. King, Statement, May 17, 1839, in Boone Court Records, Case No. 1379, fld. 15. King issued a separate statement for King Follett.

33 Pratt, Autobiography, 262.

34 Pratt, History, 65.

35 Th. [Thomas] Reynolds, Judge of the Second Judicial Circuit, and Roger N. Todd, Clerk of the Second Judicial Court to the State of Missouri, June 7–8,1839, in Boone Court Records, Case No. 1379, fld. 10. Coincidentally, this was the same Thomas Reynolds who the following year (1840) was elected governor of Missouri, succeeding Boggs. Later, as governor, he tried on two occasions to extradite Joseph Smith from Illinois back to Missouri.

36 Phelps, 3.

37 Concerning Gibbs's disaffection, Pratt reported that he turned apostate, "denied the faith and turned traitor . . . in order to save his life and gain his liberty

... [and was] kept in prison ... [to] spy upon us." Pratt, Autobiography, 257.

38 For Pratt's account of the flight to freedom see Pratt, Autobiography, 271-310. He also provided a less detailed account in a letter to his in-laws. See Pratt to Aaron and Susannah Frost, July 21, 1839, CHL. For Phelps's account, see Phelps, 5–11.

39 See Boone Court Records, Case No. 1380, fld. 21.



CONTEXTS FOR THE MURDER OF PARLEY P. PRATT

Me

BY MITCHELL O. PRATT, Walden University, Founder and CEO of The Pratt Group, LLC, Provo, UT

n May 13, 1857, some 12 miles from Van Buren, Arkansas, Parley Parker Pratt lay bleeding to death. He had just turned 50 years old a month earlier, on April 12, 1857, and had lived an extraordinary life. He himself had stated as much in a letter written in 1853:

"I have been a farmer, a servant, a fisher, a digger, a beggar, a preacher, an author, an editor, a senator, a traveler, a merchant, an elder and an Apostle of Jesus Christ. Is not truth stranger than fiction?"² Parley had been on his way home to Utah following a mission assignment in the eastern United States. Having been stabbed with a bowie knife and shot with a derringer, Parley now lay dying in a thicket of woods.³

What events led to this moment? Focusing on four important concepts—general perceptions of Mormons and Mormonism, perceptions of Mormon law, perceptions of Mormon polygamy, and the Southern "code of honor"—this article will review events and forces behind the events of that May morning.

General Perceptions of Mormonism

The divisions caused by the advent of Mormonism and by its rapid growth and dramatic

early history were broad and deep. After being forced from their homes in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois, and after the martyrdom of their founding prophet, the Saints believed they would find security and peace in the Rocky Mountains of Utah. During the decade following the arrival of the first wagon trains in the Salt Lake Valley, however, tensions between the federal government and the Saints seemed only to increase. In 1854, founders of the new Republican Party vowed to "prohibit in the Territories those twin relics of barbarism, polygamy and slavery."4 Political antipathy towards the Saints had as much to do with their control of the Utah territorial government—and their willingness to ignore federal law when it conflicted with territorial or religious law—as it did with polygamy itself. During his successful Presidential campaign in 1856, Democrat James Buchanan promised that, if his bid for office were successful, he would promptly remove Brigham Young as territorial governor. This was not an idle pledge, and within weeks of his inauguration, he and members of his Cabinet were laying plans to do precisely that.5

In the meantime, there were other signs of increasing public hostility against the Saints. During his mission to the East in 1856—57, Parley himself had written in a letter home, "The whole country is being overwhelmed with the most abominable lying mockery, and hatred of the Saints." On April 1, 1857, William Appleby—a Church member with a reputation for carefully monitoring the popular press to learn unfolding Eastern perceptions of the

Background: ROAD IN WOODS, by Jim Jones. Inset, detail from THE VERDICT OF THE PEOPLE, by George Caleb Bingham



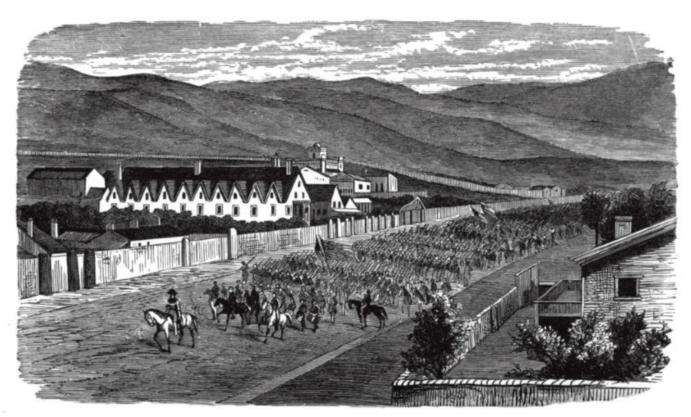
Saints—flatly warned, "I have never perceived such an acrimonious spirit prevailing against the Mormons, as appears at the present." And Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, a former Mormon ally who now felt obliged to show solidarity with citizens of his home state, delivered a partisan speech at the Illinois State House in Springfield on June 12, 1857. In it, he decried "the infamous and disgusting practices and institutions of the Mormon government," insisting that "the inhabitants of Utah, as a community, are out-laws and alien enemies"—and that Congress should "apply the knife and cut out this loathsome, disgusting ulcer." He further declared, "If there is any truth in the reports we receive from Utah, Congress may pass

Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois declared that "the inhabitants of Utah . . . are out-laws and alien enemies"—and that Congress should "apply the knife and cut out this loathsome, disgusting ulcer." On July 18, 1857, such sentiments culminated in the departure of twenty-five hundred army troops—known as the Utah Expedition or, informally, Johnston's Army.

what laws it chooses, but you can never rely upon the local tribunals and juries to punish crimes committed by Mormons in that Territory."8 On July 18, 1857, such sentiments culminated in the departure of twenty five hundred army troops—known as the Utah Expedition or, informally, as Johnston's Army—from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, bound across the prairie to insure the safe installation of a new territorial governor. This marked the beginning of the Utah War.

Perceptions of Mormon Law

To understand how Americans outside the Church viewed the concept of "Mormon law" in the 1850s, it is necessary to understand their view of "law" itself. Most obviously because of Constitutional clauses protecting slavery in direct contradiction to rights secured by the Constitution's first 10 amendments and underscored in the Declaration of Independence, Northerners saw the Constitution as a flawed document and tended to interpret it broadly, directed by its "spirit" or fundamental intent rather than its "letter." This attitude carried over to federal laws the North considered immoral, most notably the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. Southerners, in contrast, demanded



attention to the law's letter, especially to its details protecting what they increasingly viewed as their rights as a minority group. Powerless to enforce Northern acquiescence to laws that the North itself had helped enact, including the Fugitive Slave Act and the larger Compromise of 1850, the South became impatient and then angry; it would eventually secede from the Union and quite literally take the law into its own hands.

Immediately following the Compromise of 1850, Southerners saw Mormons as potential allies who might join them as fellow slaveholders. It soon became clear, however, that the Saints had no intention of making Utah a slave territory. Furthermore, they seemed to misappropriate the popular sovereignty clause attached to their territorial status, using it not to procure slaves, as had been intended by Southerners, but to audaciously justify the practice of polygamy—a principle publicly announced to the Saints by Brigham Young and Orson Pratt at a special conference in 1852. Mormon acceptance of polygamy also undermined the residual goodwill of Northerners toward the Saints. Politicians who had gone out on proverbial limbs for the Saints prior to passage of the Compromise of 1850 felt betrayed by the announcement of 1852. Mormons were not to be trusted, and it was feared that they would accept as the will of God any doctrine so presented to them, no matter how apparently irrational or debauched. Furthermore, it was believed they would obey as God's law—regardless of other laws standing in their way—any practice deriving from such a doctrine.

The 19th-century Saints saw their own law a bit differently. Early Mormon history had conditioned them to be defensive. In the years preceding and following the formal organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1830, there were those who joined its ranks and supported it to the end—and those who did not. The seeds of antipathy planted during the 1830s and early 1840s would mature during the late 1840s and early 1850s as the anti-Mormon intolerance eventually held by most of the country. Having abandoned homes and property in move after

Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, former Mormon ally

move, and having received only faint support or redress from national or state governments under which they lived, they somewhat justifiably looked to God's laws rather than man's as their priority and stay.

Mormons believe God speaks to humanity through prophets that he himself chooses; God holds humanity responsible to hear and obey his word regardless of how it is delivered: "Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants," he declares, "it is the same" (D&C 1:39). Nineteenth-century Saints also lived by the following statements of belief; these were accepted as scripture in 1835:

"We believe that no government can exist in peace, except such laws are framed and held inviolate as will secure to each individual the free exercise of conscience, the right and control of property, and the protection of life. . . .

"We believe that religion is instituted of God; and that men are amenable to him, and to him only, for the exercise of it, unless their religious opinions prompt them to infringe upon the rights and liberties of others. . . .

"We believe that all men are bound to sustain and uphold the respective governments in which they reside, while protected in their inherent and inalienable rights by the laws of such governments." (D&C 134:2, 4, 5)

In 1869 when a *New York World* reporter asked Eleanor McLean, Parley's 12th wife, if she had secured a legal divorce from her husband Hector and if she had legally married Parley, she provided this representative LDS understanding of divine and temporal law: "No, the sectarian priests have no power from God to marry; and as a so-called marriage ceremony performed by them is no marriage at all, no divorce was needed. The priesthood with its powers and privileges, can be found nowhere upon the face of the earth but in Utah.

"... I regard the laws of Celestial Marriage, or, as the 'Gentiles' term it, polygamy, as the keystone

of our religion. That is wherein we differ from the sects of the world. They hope for salvation in a heaven where husbands and wives shall be utter strangers to each other; we expect to reach a heaven where we shall rear families, the same as we do here. We could not do this unless we had a revelation authorizing Celestial Marriage; and we could not be saved in the Celestial Kingdom without obeying this revelation. It is the great distinctive feature of our religion, and by it our religion stands or falls."

Perceptions of Mormon Polygamy

During the Nauvoo period, Joseph Smith began teaching his inner circle the doctrine and practice of Celestial Marriage as well as the concept of plural marriage. 10 As a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, Parley was taught this doctrine in 1843; shortly thereafter, he began to practice polygamy himself.¹¹ Response outside the Church to the 1852 public announcement of "the Principle" has been noted. Outside the Church, interestingly enough, Mormons were often compared to another disparaged immigrant body, the Chinese. The two groups shared the "detestable habit" of polygamy; both were reputed to be "anti-republican" and "imperialist."12 In an essay section comparing the two groups, Aaron Augustus Sargent, a California lawyer and politician, ends with an opinion typifying general American sentiment: "The point is not here made, that the evils of the influx of Mongolians are greater than those of the influx of Mormons, but that they are similar in nature."13

Polygamy certainly was not popular, not even among many of the Saints. Indeed, its practice divided many members of the Church. Even among those who sincerely believed Joseph Smith to be a prophet, and even among those closest to Joseph, there were some who rejected the practice. Most of these eventually rejected Joseph himself. That the doctrine was introduced to the main body of the Saints by Brigham Young following Joseph's death was perhaps further reason for its limited popularity. It is a well-known fact that, at any given time, fewer than 25 percent of the adult membership of the Church were in polygamous



The Southern code of honor: "When a man's honor was impugned, it was imperative that he confront the transgressor in order to save face. . . . In particularly severe cases, only violence against the offending party could restore lost honor."

marriages. Even for those who accepted and tried to live the doctrine, it was an often-heavy burden to bear. While many polygamous households were not only productive but genuinely happy, and while descendants of Mormon polygamous relationships now number in the hundreds of thousands, polygamy nevertheless remained a divisive doctrine throughout its history within the Church.

Southern Code of Honor

The Southern code of honor, especially that of the antebellum South, was a man's paramount personal code. Mormon historian Patrick Mason suggests this way of considering the Southern code: "When a man's honor was impugned, it was imperative that he confront the transgressor in order to save face (turning the other cheek is not typically a compelling value in honor-bound societies). In particularly severe cases, only violence against the offending party could restore lost honor."¹⁴

Exacerbated by rising tensions between South and North and by a growing sense of helplessness and betrayal, the anger of Southern men—and especially those of the poorer classes—gradually transformed the code of honor into a tool of revenge and "frontier justice."

Prelude to the Murder

Most obviously, Parley's murder was a consequence of his relationships with Hector and Eleanor M. McLean. In the jargon of sensationalist literature, the murder was a tragic outcome of a love triangle. But real life is hardly ever as simple as the stuff of popular romance, and a careful exploration of historical fact reveals characters motivated much more strongly by public integrity—or, in Hector McLean's case, by public reputation—than by personal desire or need.

Eleanor Jane McComb was born December 9, 1817, in Wheeling, Virginia, but grew up in Greenville, Louisiana, just outside New Orleans. In 1841, when she was 24, Eleanor met and married Hector McLean; they were the parents of three children: Fitzroy, Albert, and Annie. Soon after their daughter's birth, Hector lapsed into his earlier habit of heavy drinking, often becoming abusive, and the couple separated three years later. After counseling with her father and two brothers, Eleanor wrote Hector the following: "Having used every

persuasion in my power to no effect, I see but three alternatives, all ending in misery if not in crime. First, to live a victum of the vice to which you have become a prey; 2nd to seek a home among strangers; or 3rd shall the smoothe current of the Mississippi be the last page that any may read of my 'Ill Fate'?"15

Hector replied, in part, "Nea, Ellen . . . I will cease to grieve your gentle spirit, and we will live together so long as it is the will and good pleasure of a Heavenly Parent we should. . . . I must be saved and reformed."16 The couple were reconciled and decided—in the late 1840s—to move to San Francisco with their three children and Eleanor's brother, J. J. McComb. In 1851, Eleanor, Hector, and J. J. were introduced to Mormonism. Eleanor soon converted, but Hector would not allow her to be baptized. He purchased a "sword cane" and boasted he would kill Eleanor and the missionary who tried to baptize her.¹⁷ One evening, on hearing Eleanor singing Mormon hymns, Hector became enraged and beat Eleanor; he then threw



her out of the house and locked the door behind her. ¹⁸ Eleanor later exclaimed, "I presume McLean himself would not deny that I then declared that I would no more be his wife however many years I might be compelled to appear as such for the sake of my children." ¹⁹

T leanor eventually returned to her husband. He Lirelented and gave his permission for her to be baptized a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; the event occurred May 24, 1854.20 In the meantime, Parley had been called by the First Presidency of the Church to preside over the Pacific Mission headquartered in San Francisco, arriving on July 2, 1854. His third wife, Elizabeth, accompanied him. Elizabeth was not well; the Pratts had little money and were dependent on Church members for their support. Eleanor McLean was one of the sisters who occasionally provided them food and other necessities.²¹ While in the Pratt home, Eleanor confided her domestic concerns, and Parley attempted to counsel her and Hector. Because the code of honor was so ingrained in Hector, however, he resented Parley's interference.

Indeed, Hector soon became embittered against Mormonism, and when Eleanor refused to give up her Church membership, Hector threatened to have her institutionalized. A few weeks later, Hector instead put their three children, unaccompanied, aboard a ship to New Orleans, the home of Eleanor's parents. Two weeks later, he paid Eleanor's passage to New Orleans as well. After arriving in New Orleans, however, Eleanor realized her parents would not allow her to keep her children if she remained a Mormon. Her health declining, Eleanor determined to leave her children with her parents and join the Saints in Utah. There, she was hired as schoolteacher for the younger Pratt children—and she became Parley's 12th wife on November 14, 1855, sealed to him by Brigham Young in the Endowment House.²²

In 1856, Parley was called on a mission to the eastern states. He went to his wife Agatha and said, "Agatha, I have bad news for you." Agatha asked, "What is it?" Parley said, "I am called on

a mission." Agatha responded, "Why do you call it bad news? You have been on missions before." Parley replied, "Because I feel as if I shall never come back."²³ Yet he accepted the call and, because he was heading east, decided that Eleanor would accompany him. They would separate en route: he would continue east, and Eleanor would head south to New Orleans to regain custody of her children. Parley's assignment was to travel through the northeastern states and assist where he could. For the next several months, he did just that.

Eleanor, in the meantime, was trying to convince her parents that she had renounced Mormonism, as that was the only condition on which they would relinquish the children to her care. Eventually, she was able to leave with her two youngest children, heading northwest.²⁴ She and Parley had communicated periodically through letters to one another, and she now let him know her travel plans westward. Parley determined to go to St. Louis and join a wagon train. They apparently would meet somewhere on the plains.

The Trial and the Murder

Unbeknownst to Parley and Eleanor, however, Hector had become a postal inspector and, with the help of colleagues, was intercepting and reading their letters. Thus, Hector nearly succeeded in cornering Parley in St. Louis, but with the help of Church members, Parley escaped. Again, Parley and Eleanor exchanged letters and rearranged separate routes west. Again, Hector intercepted their messages and made his own plans. The resulting story hit most papers across America. On the first page of the St. Louis Evening News for May 19, 1857, for example, was the dramatic headline, "Recapture of Children Stolen by Mormons. Elder Pratt in Custody." The story itself was fully as sensational. "About two months ago," it began, "we published an account of the kidnapping of several children by the Mormons in New Orleans.

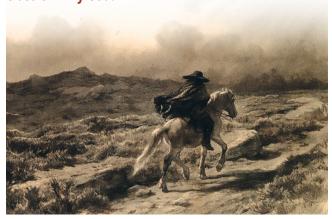
"The father was absent at the time, in California, and the mother, who had been deluded by the saints, lent herself to the infamous schemes by which her own children were to be ruined. The kidnappers started with the children from New Orleans

to go through Texas, Arkansas and the Indian Nation to the Salt Lake Trail, but were fortunately interrupted by the father who having heard of the affair had returned and started in pursuit of them."

The story then incorporated a letter from Hector to unnamed friends, dated May 7, in which he brags that he has endured "a sore tramp," but that he has "succeeded in coming up with Eleanor and the children," having "taken the children from her by force." Eleanor, he reports, is "in charge of the U.S. Marshal"; Parley has also been arrested. Apparently having no workable alternative, Hector states that he secured the arrests "on charge of larceny, in stealing the clothing on the children when kidnapped—in the value \$8 to \$10." He closes with the line, "Thank God for his goodness," suggesting that Hector considered himself fully justified in doing all that he had done.

Hector had tracked Eleanor and the children to Creek Indian territory in what is present-day Oklahoma; after beating Eleanor, he had requested that she be taken into custody. On May 8 Eleanor was conveyed to nearby Fort Gibson; reports that Parley had been spotted nearby turned out to be true, and along with his missionary companion, George Higginson, Parley was arrested and brought

After acquitting Parley of all charges, Judge Ogden arranged for Parley's horse to be brought to where Parley waited outside the jail. The judge also offered Parley a knife and a pistol, but Parley refused, saying, "Gentlemen, I do not rely on weapons of that kind, my trust is in my God."



Artwork by Rosa Bonheur

to Fort Gibson as well. The following morning, May 9, the prisoners left on a three-day journey to Van Buren, Arkansas, about 80 miles to the east, arriving the morning of May 11. It was in Van Buren they would stand trial.²⁶

Judge John Ogden presided over the court when it was convened that afternoon, immediately releasing Higginson since there were no charges against him. Eleanor was questioned first, and although the judge seemed "severe in tone" in the beginning, his attitude changed as Eleanor was questioned. The next morning, May 12, a crowd filled the courtroom. After calling the court to order, Judge Ogden dismissed the charges against Eleanor. Then, as Parley was brought in, Hector was allowed to read the charges against him. As Parley rose to respond, Hector drew his pistol to shoot. Court officers immediately surrounded and subdued Hector, but because of the disturbance, court was recessed until 4:00 pm. That afternoon it was announced that the trial had been further postponed until 8:00 the following morning. This last postponement was a ruse to trick Hector. The court had actually acquitted Parley of all charges but intended to keep him in jail overnight for his own protection.

Early on the morning of Wednesday, May 13, Judge Ogden had arranged for Parley's horse to be brought to where Parley waited outside the jail. The judge also offered Parley a knife and a pistol, but Parley refused, saying, "Gentlemen, I do not rely on weapons of that kind, my trust is in my God. Good-bye, Gentlemen." And with that, Parley rode off.²⁷ Hector had stayed up all night. In fact, Judge Ogden had pled with him until 2:00 am, trying to talk Hector out of harming Parley, but it was to no avail. Hector had enlisted the help of several men, most of them Masons, and some of these had kept watch at the jail. When they notified Hector that Parley had escaped, Hector and several companions immediately left in pursuit.

There had been a light rain that morning, and tracks were easy to follow. While some of Hector's companions turned back, wanting no part in what would follow, James Cornell and Amasa Howell remained with Hector in pursuit. Some 12

miles from Van Buren, they caught up with Parley. Drawing his pistol and still on horseback, Hector fired several times at Parley, who had goaded his own horse into a gallop. Bullet holes were later found in Parley's coat, shirt, and saddle, but none had hit his body. Finally catching Parley in a grove and pulling him from his horse, Hector stabbed Parley with a bowie knife. Two of the wounds formed a V-shape over Parley's left breast; a third wound penetrated his heart. After leaving the scene and returning to his companions, Hector was asked whether Parley was dead. Borrowing a derringer, Hector retraced his steps and shot Parley point-blank in the neck. Postmortem evidence showed that the bullet glanced off his collarbone.

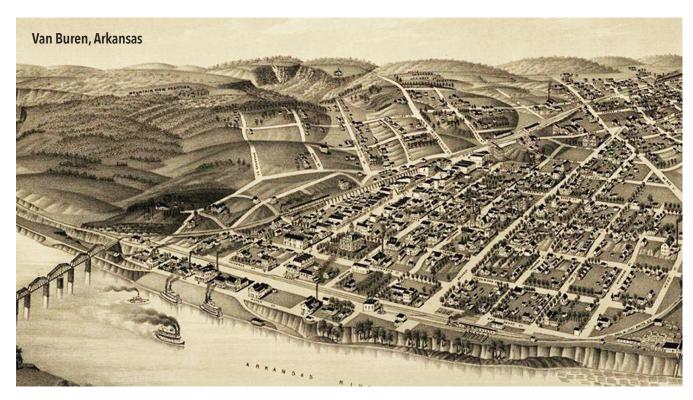
The murder occurred near the home of a local blacksmith, Zealy Wynn, who saw much of what transpired. Thinking Parley dead, Wynn notified neighbors; they walked with him to the place of attack. They found Parley still conscious; on seeing Wynn, Parley said, "Sir, will you please give me a drink of water? I am thirsty and raise my head if you please." Wynn's neighbors wondered aloud whether to send for a doctor, but Parley replied, "I want no Doctors for I will be dead in a

few minutes." When asked if he had any requests, Parley said, "I have a family in Salt Lake City, Utah Territory, and that is my home. My gold is in this pocket (pointing to his pants) and my gold watch is in this, and I want them with all my effects sent to my family in Salt Lake. Write to a Mr. Couch Flint Post Office Cherokee Nation and let him have all my things to send to my family."²⁸

After requesting that the men arrange for his body to be returned to Utah for burial, Parley bore a final witness of the Restoration: "I die a firm believer in the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith, and I wish you to carry this my dying testimony. I know that the Gospel is true and that Joseph Smith was a prophet of the Living God, I am dying a martyr to the faith."²⁹

The Reaction

Hector, upon returning to Van Buren, went to the bar in the hotel where Eleanor was staying. When asked what had happened, Hector replied, "Well, I have done a good work." Word traveled quickly to the Saints in Utah, and they responded to Parley's death with shock, disbelief, and sorrow. Nationwide, however, news of the murder generally



was met with celebration, and Hector McLean was hailed as a hero. The *Van Buren Intelligencer* wrote that it regretted the act, but "more than all do we deplore the melancholy affair that led to its commission." The *New Orleans Bulletin* justified Hector as being "stung to phrenzy, maddened beyond the power of endurance, under the grievous outrage he had endured" and praised him as an Achilles who "leaped upon a charger and as with the wings of the wind, overtook the destroyer of his peace, and slew him." 32

Countering such reports and wanting to protect Parley's legacy, Eleanor wrote a letter to the Arkansas Intelligencer calling Parley "a fountain of light and intelligence, at which thousands might drink, and yet the stream flowed, clear, pure and free."33 While her letter was reprinted nationally, it generally was accompanied by sarcastic editorializing. The Saints themselves obviously drew parallels between Parley's murder and those of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Statements from Church leaders underscored this connection. Brigham Young affirmed, "One more good man has gone to assist Joseph and Hyrum . . . in an other sphere"34; and Wilford Woodruff observed, "This was painful news to his family. The papers of the United States are filled with bitter revileings against us. The devil is exceeding mad."35

Not all the people of Van Buren or of similar towns across the country supported the events of that day. Several Van Buren residents assisted Eleanor in preparing Parley's body for burial, and Judge Ogden provided Eleanor financial support. The Wynns allowed Parley's body to be taken to their home where it was washed and wrapped with the white linen that a Mr. Smith, owner of the hotel where Eleanor was staying, provided. The Wynns also gave permission for Parley's burial in their family cemetery. William Steward, who had known Parley as a boy in New York and who owned a local sawmill, provided a casket he had made for himself. His son, John Steward, drove the wagon that transported the body.³⁶

"I want no Doctors for I will be dead in a few minutes.... I die a firm believer in the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith, and I wish you to carry this my dying testimony."

1 The author is indebted to R. Steven Pratt, whose article "Eleanor McLean and the Murder of Parley P. Pratt" (*BYU Studies*, 15, No. 2 [winter 1975], 225–58) is the seminal work on the murder. The author is also obliged to Terryl L. Givens and Matthew L. Grow, whose biography *Parley P. Pratt: The Apostle Paul of Mormonism* (New York: Oxford, 2011) provided additional

- 2 Parley P. Pratt to William Peterson, May 9, 1855, Parley P. Pratt Collection, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
- 3 Givens and Grow, 382-83.

essential information on this topic.

- 4 The phrase is attributed to John A. Willis, a San Francisco lawyer and chair of the California delegation to the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia of 1856. Named to the committee assigned to draft the National Republican Party platform that year, he received the specific assignment to draft a resolution regarding slavery. Subsequently, the Convention body upheld the original language of his draft. This is his resolution as it appeared in published form: "Resolved, That the Constitution confers upon Congress sovereign power over the territories of the United States for their government, and that in the exercise of this power it is both the right and the duty of Congress to prohibit in the Territories those twin relics of barbarism—polygamy and slavery." John A. Willis, "The Twin Relics of Barbarism," Historical Society of Southern California, Los Angeles 1, No. 5 (1890); 40-44.
- 5 Givens and Grow, 366, 380, 389.
- 6 Givens and Grow, 372.
- 7 Givens and Grow. 387.
- 8 Stephen A. Douglas, *Remarks of the Hon. Stephen A. Douglas, on Kansas, Utah, and the Dred Scott Decision* (Chicago: Daily Times Book and Job Office, 1857), 12, 13.
- 9 New York World, Nov. 23, 1869, 2.
- 10 Brian C. Hales and Laura H. Hales, *Joseph Smith's Polygamy: Toward a Better Understanding* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford, 2015), 1.
- 11 The author is descended from Belinda Marden, Parley's sixth wife and the author's great-great-grandmother.
- 12 Aaron Augustus Sargent, "'The Wyoming Anti-Chinese Riot'—Again," *Overland Monthly* 7:37 (Jan. 1886); 58.

13 Sargent, 59.

14 Patrick Q. Mason, "Honor, the Unwritten Law and Extralegal Violence: Contextualizing Parley Pratt's Murder," in Gregory K. Armstrong, Matthew J. Grow, and Dennis J. Siler, eds., *Parley P. Pratt and the Making of Mormonism* (Norman, OK: Arthur H. Clark, 2011), 250.

15, R. Steven Pratt, 226.

16 R. Steven Pratt, 226

17 Matthew J. Grow, "Martyred Apostle or Un-Saintly Seducer?" in Armstrong, Grow, and Siler, eds., 278.

18 R. Steven Pratt, 227.

19 R. Steven Pratt, 227.

20 R. Steven Pratt, 227.

21 R. Steven Pratt, 228.

22 R. Steven Pratt, 234.

23 Givens and Grow, 366.

24 R. Steven Pratt, 234.

25 R. Steven Pratt, 241; St. Louis *Evening News*, May 19, 1857. The letter also reveals his assumption that the larceny charges would not hold up—and if not, he planned that Parley would be taken to Missouri to face charges from years earlier.

26 R. Steven Pratt, 242. Because Eleanor and Parley were taken on Indian territory, both law enforcement and military personnel were involved in the arrests and custodial duties.

27 R. Steven Pratt, 242-45.

28 Givens and Grow, 382-83.

29 R. Steven Pratt, 248. James Orme, the local justice of the peace, examined the murder scene and Parley's body. He found \$72 in addition to gold coins, a gold pen, glasses with gold rims, "a new pocket knife in his pocket closed and unused," and "a bunch of paper about the size of a common egg bloody on one end" that Parley had apparently used in an attempt to stop the bleeding. See Givens and Grow, 383–84.

30 Givens and Grow, 384.

31 Givens and Grow, 386.

32 Givens and Grow, 386.

33 Grow, 281.

34 Grow, 289.

35 Grow, 288.

36 R. Stephen Pratt, 249.

Farewell, My Kind and Faithful Friend by R. Steven Pratt

In April 1836, nine years after his marriage to Thankful Halsey, Parley was discussing with her what he should do about his call to serve a mission in Canada. Thankful had recurring health problems, and they were still in debt to Joseph Smith and others. Heber Kimball knocked on the door and, once inside, prophesied that Thankful would be healed and would bear a son. This promise greatly affected Thankful and Parley as they had had no children during their 10-year marriage. Parley went on

Farewell, My Kind and Faithful Friend

by Parley P. Pratt

1. Farewell, my kind and faithful friend,

The partner of my early youth,

While from my home my steps I bend,

To warn mankind and teach the truth.

2. How oft, in silent evening mild,

I to some lonely place repair,

Thy love and kindness call to mind

And lift my voice in humble prayer.

3. O Lord, extend Thine arms of Love
Around the partner of my heart,
For Thou hast spoken from above,
And called me from my all to part.

4. Preserve her soul in perfect peace,
From sickness, sorrow, grief, and pain,
Until our pilgrimage shall cease,
And we on Zion's hill shall reign.

5. How gladly wou'd my soul retire

With thee to spend a peaceful life
In some sequestered, humble vale,

Far from the scenes of noise and strife!

6. Where sin should grieve our souls no more,
Nor rage of men disturb our peace;
Our troubles, toils, and sorrows o'er—
There lies and persecution cease.

the mission, even taking Thankful with him for a portion of it. On March 25, 1837, seven days after her 40th birthday, Thankful gave birth to Parley P. Pratt, Jr. The previous day, Thankful had had a dream that she would soon be in paradise, and she longed for death to relieve her suffering. Three hours after her infant son's birth, Thankful was dead.¹ Following is an excerpt from Parley's Autobiography, together with his "Farewell, My Kind and Faithful Friend," a hymn text modeled on his elegy to Thankful, "Lamentation in Memory of His Departed Wife, Who Died March 25, 1837."² Both of these were among the poems Parley described as having been "wrung from a bosom overflowing with grief at the loss of those who were nearest and dearest to my heart."³

"She was buried in the churchyard near the temple in Kirtland; many hundreds attended the funeral and wept sorely, for she was extensively known. Her trials, for the gospel's sake, while her husband had been absent from time to time on distant missions, her lingering sickness of years, her barrenness, her miraculous cure, her conception of the promised child, were all matters

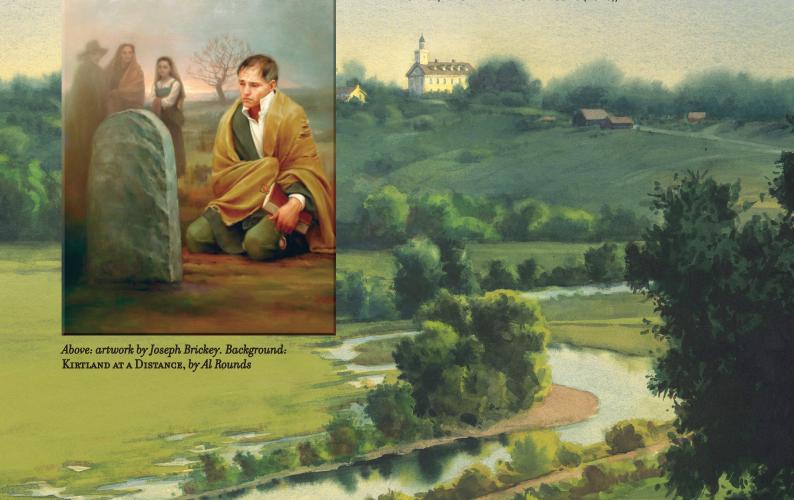
of note in the Church far and near. But she had gone behind the veil to rest, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest; while I was left to toil and struggle alone. My grief, and sorrow, and lone-liness I shall not attempt to describe. . . .

"Farewell, my dear Thankful, thou wife of my youth, and mother of my first born; the beginning of my strength—farewell. Yet a few more lingering years of sorrow, pain and toil, and I shall be with thee, and clasp thee to my bosom, and thou shalt sit down on my throne, as a queen and priestess unto thy lord, arrayed in white robes of dazzling splendor and decked with precious stones and gold, while thy queen sisters shall minister before thee and bless thee, and thy sons and daughters innumerable shall call thee blessed, and hold thy name in everlasting remembrance."

1 Parley P. Pratt, Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt, ed. Parley P. Pratt, Jr. (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1985), 130–68; Messenger and Advocate, May 1836, 377–97; Parley P. Pratt to John Taylor, Nov. 27, 1836, John Taylor Papers, CHL; Messenger and Advocate, April 1837, 496; Wilford Woodruff Journal, Mar. 26, 1837, CHL; Joseph Fielding Journal, CHL, 8–10.

2 "Lamentation" was collected in Parley P. Pratt, *The Millennium and Other Poems* (1840), 86–88.

3 Pratt, Millennium and Other Poems (1840), iii-iv.



The Morning Breaks

by R. Steven Pratt

When his poems "were first written," Parley once declared, he had "no intention of compiling them." Yet if even one of these occasional poems helped "rouse the mind[s] of men from that long slumber into which they have fallen," or if it led them to "careful investigation and inquiry into the great truths of revelation," or if it inspired them "with faith and devotion"—then, Parley says, "the writer will have gained his end."

"The Morning Breaks" had much more formal origins and was even a kind of commissioned poem. Following is Parley's brief account of its composition:

"On the 15th of April, 1840, a General Conference was convened in the "Temperance Hall," Preston, Lancashire, in which thirty-three branches of the Church were represented, including a total of near two thousand members. In this conference, Elders Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball and I were appointed a publishing committee for the Church. I was also appointed editor and publisher of a monthly periodical, to be called the *Millennial Star*.

"The first number of the Star was issued in May. The following hymn was written by myself, expressly for the introduction of this periodical and originally appeared on its cover:

"The morning breaks, the shadows flee; Lo! Zion's standard is unfurled!

The dawning of a brighter day Majestic rises on the world."²

It is known that Parley borrowed the opening line of "The Morning Breaks" from John Wesley's well-known "Come, O Thou Traveler Unknown," a hymn cast as Jacob's first-person account of his wrestling with God (see Genesis 32:22–32). This is the ninth stanza of Wesley's hymn:

'Tis Love! 'tis Love! Thou diedst for me!
I hear Thy whisper in my heart;
The morning breaks, the shadows flee,
Pure, universal love Thou art;
To me, to all, Thy bowels move;
Thy nature and Thy Name is Love.

Within the context of his own hymn, Parley greatly changes the significance of Wesley's original line. Even though Wesley's full stanza emphasizes the "universal love" of the Savior, the line itself narrowly references the hard-won personal blessings of the narrator—the fading of personal discouragement and doubt; the individualized dawning of brighter hope. In Parley's hymn, however, the line is a joyous declaration to the world that Christ's gospel has been restored, that the heavens are open and God speaks to His prophet, and that unimagined blessings await those who embrace the truth.

See "The Morning Breaks" on back cover.

1 Parley P. Pratt, The Millennium, A Poem (1835), 7. 2 Parley P. Pratt, Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt, ed. Parley P. Pratt, Jr. (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1985), 264–5.

Among the Sierra Nevada Mountains. California (1868), *by Albert Bierstadt*



Parley P. Pratt Monument

The Parley P. Pratt Park is located at 2100 South 2300 East near the mouth of Parley's Canyon in Salt Lake City.

The park is a joint, two-year effort of the Big Kanyon Committee, and the Salt Lake City Parks and Recreation department. Contributions were made by individuals, families, and various organiations throughout the community.

Local artist, Ed Fraughton, created the monument and

statue depicting Elder Pratt with an open toolbox and surveying instruments for building a road.

Parley P. Pratt Gravesite, Alma, Arkansas

The memorial stands near the site of Pratt's murder, just off Interstate 540 in Crawford County, Arkansas.



The Golden Pass Road – Parley's Canyon

Location: Sons of Utah Pioneers balcony

Inscription reads: "Travel

the Golden Pass, open July fourth. Immigrants coming into the valley may now avoid the difficult route over Big and Little Mountains by taking the new route. Several thousand dollars have been spent by the proprietor to make the new road possible."

Parley P. Pratt, proprietor. So ran an advertisement in the third issue of the *Deseret News* of June 29, 1850. Parley P. Pratt cut the road through Parley's Canyon in 1849–50. The beginning (or end) of the road was about Twenty-First South and Eleventh East and thence east to what was called Dell Fork. To defray the cost of construction a toll for passage was charged "75 cents for a two-horse outfit, 10 cents for each additional pack or saddle animal, and sheep a mere cent per head." The road was described as poor with rocks and stumps. However it opened up the hollow and canyon to industry, farming and recreation.

From this vantage point, the toll gate was located at the north side of Parley's Creek, just below the present location of the S.U.P. Headquarters building. Portions

of the old dirt road can still be seen going up the hollow around Suicide Rock into the awesome magnitude of Parley's Canyon. At sunset one may get a spectacular view of the aureate colored face of the canyon walls, from which was derived the original name, "Golden Pass Road."

Pratt sold the road to finance his mission to Chile. By 1862 the Golden Pass Road, an approximately 42-mile long immigrant trail from the mouth of Echo Canyon through Coalville and Silver Creek Junction, then west through Parley's Canyon to Sugar House, was the preferred route into the valley. The overland stage began using it that year.





The Morning Breaks

by Parley P. Pratt

- The morning breaks, the shadows flee;
 Lo! Zion's standard is unfurled!
 The dawning of a brighter day
 Majestic rises on the world.
- 2. The clouds of error disappear
 Before the rays of truth divine;
 The glory, bursting from afar,
 Wide o'er the nations soon will shine.
- 3. The Gentile fullness now comes in; And Israel's blessings are at hand; Lo! Judah's remnant, cleansed from sin, Shall in their promised Canaan stand.
- 4. Jehovah speaks! Let earth give ear,
 And Gentile nations turn and live.
 His mighty arm is making bare
 His covenant people to receive.
- 5. Angels from heav'n and truth from earth Have met, and both have record borne; Thus Zion's light is bursting forth To bring her ransomed children home.

Hymns of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, no. 1.

